

RUSTY

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NASON H. ARNOLD



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RUSTY
THE ADVENTURES OF A
LITTLE DOG



RUSTY LAUNCHED HIS LITTLE BODY THROUGH THE AIR.

Page 236.

RUSTY

THE ADVENTURES OF A
LITTLE DOG

By NASON H. ARNOLD

Illustrated by
GRISWOLD TYNG



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To
Harriet and Jean

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RUSTY

THE ADVENTURES OF A LITTLE DOG



CHAPTER I

RUSTY'S NEW HOME

RUSTY's master picked him up and put him on the big white bed. "Dead dog," he said.

Rusty lay down because he had been taught to do so and keep quiet when he

heard those words. But why he had been placed on the bed, a forbidden place, was a puzzle.

The whole morning had been full of surprises. His master had washed and dried him with great care. After that, every hair had been combed and brushed until no amount of shaking made that little black spaniel feel comfortable. It wasn't the first time he had been washed and brushed, but never before had he had a big yellow bow tied to his collar! And never before had he been put on the bed.

With all these things to wonder about, Rusty kept very still and watched his master as he washed his own face and hands and combed his hair. That done, he picked Rusty up in his arms and told him they were going to make a visit.

"I'm going to make him buy you, for I can't bother with you any more," he said.

Rusty wriggled to get down and run. He tried to lick his master's face to tell him that he would be good and trot right behind him, but he was told to "be still." It was spring, and everything smelled so lovely, and it was nice and muddy and—there was a cat!

How Rusty did wriggle and whine and whimper. Not that he wanted to hurt that cat, but he did like to bark two or three times in a sharp voice and run after a cat—if the cat would run. Of course, some cats just stood still and there was no fun with them. But he was sure this one would run if he could only get down. He wriggled harder than ever, but his master just held him tighter with one arm and with the other hand opened a door and walked into a big room.

This was a place Rusty had never seen before. And there was another room in

back with somebody in it, for a voice from in back called, "Come right in."

That's what Rusty wanted to do more than anything else just then. He liked that voice and, besides, he wanted to see what was there. He hadn't had a chance all the morning to run about and sniff.

And now his master was putting him down and never saying a word. He fussed with the big bow while he held Rusty. Of all things, to put a big bow on a dog!

"Go along and find him," said his master.

"Yip. Yip." Just two little joyous barks and he threw out his little front legs and started off with his hind legs following right along, and behind them was his stubby tail with its long, silky hairs waving from side to side.

So Rusty trotted right into that back

room. Things smelled nice in there. No cabbage cooking, nor onions. Those were two things Rusty could not bear to smell, and they were not in this room he knew as he turned his nose in every direction while his snapping eyes seemed to see everything at once.

This man was a much nicer-looking man than his master. He had pushed his chair back from his desk and had been looking towards the door expecting to see Rusty's master. He was surprised to see a little dog instead of a man. But he recovered quickly.

"Why, hello! Who are you?" he asked, as Rusty stopped short; that is, all of him stopped but his tail. No little black spaniel, happy at having been put down to run, could stop a tail from almost snapping right off when any one spoke to him like that.

He trotted two or three steps nearer and stopped again. His master didn't let him jump into his lap. He wondered if this man would be like that. Rusty was sure that he looked like a man who would like to have a little dog jump into his lap and cuddle down. But a puppy couldn't be just sure at first. Of course he had wanted to run and play, even to chase that cat, but this was different. He could chase a cat at any time, so if this man really wanted a little dog to snuggle down and pretend to catch forty winks of sleep, Rusty was willing.

He looked around at the door. But his master must have forgotten him. He hadn't even come to the door and told him to come back and behave himself! Rusty could not understand that at all.

So he looked back at this new man and his tail said, "If you were to let me up

in your lap, we should be regular pals in just one minute."

And right then Rusty found that this new man knew dog language, because Rusty hadn't finished spelling the words with his tail when the man said:

"All right. Come on up if you wish to."

Such an invitation had not come to Rusty in all his young life. He never had heard the words. But he knew what had been said. Any friendly little dog would have known.

"Yip." One leap and he was there. One kiss for a "thank you," two quick turns around, and then a flop down hard with a little grunt. It was easy to tell that this man liked little dogs with long silky ears, because the first thing he did was to reach down and pick up the one he could see, and pull it ever so gently.

When he did it again and again, Rusty snuggled down closer with a happy little sigh while his tail banged away on the man's leg to tell him that he could keep pulling that ear all he wanted to. What more could a small dog do?

Rusty opened one eye when he heard the voice he had been taught to obey, to see whether his master were coming for him. He saw him standing in the door and smiling. Rusty couldn't remember that he had ever seen him smile before. Perhaps, after all, he liked to have little dogs jump into some laps if not in his own.

With the gentle stroking of his ear, Rusty found it a hard struggle to keep awake. His eyes would not stay open even with his master standing there. The men were talking about something that he couldn't understand, but he didn't care

about that so long as he could remain where he was.

When a minute or two later the man slid his chair towards his desk, Rusty tried to sit up. A friendly but firm hand held him down.

“Stay right where you are, old man,” he was told. “You’re all right.” The hand patted him. So Rusty turned around the other way and settled down again.

But he had no sooner got settled than his master’s voice said: “Good-bye, Rusty. Be a good dog, and when you get to your new home do all the tricks I have taught you.”

His master went out. Rusty sat up in a hurry, listening to know if he were to follow. But he heard no call. He looked up into the face of his new friend, his eyes questioning, his tail slowly asking

what he should do. It was strange how this new man knew what a dog's tail said!

"You stay where you are, Rusty. You're mine now, and if Janet doesn't insist on keeping you with her all the time, this is where you are going to be every day. Do you think you will like it?"

Rusty's two front paws were planted squarely on the man's chest as he looked him straight in the eye. His tail said: "If you mean that, I'm going to kiss you. I can tell if you really mean it by looking you in the eye."

In those eyes Rusty saw good nature and love of small dogs which brought a quick, very moist kiss. He intended to give him several more, that his new master might know how much the little dog loved him, but he was told that one was enough, as a hand began fumbling at the big yellow bow.

“We’ll get this thing off so we can both feel better,” he said. “Then you get down and look around a few minutes while I finish some work I must do. After that, if you don’t bother me, we’ll take a ride home and see what the folks say about you.”

The great big ribbon was dropped into a big basket on the floor at the side of the desk. Rusty looked up to be sure that he was not expected to do anything about it. He knew that he had been bothered with it for the last time when this new master called to a man in the big front office to be sure that the outer door was closed, so “my new dog will not get out until we come to know each other a little better.”

Rusty had no desire to go out. He understood his new master very well now. Besides, he hadn’t had a minute to smell

and see everything in his office and in the big front one. If he was to live there, he had lots to do before he could spare time to go out. He jumped down and trotted into the front room.

The man there smiled at him, and said that he was such a little fellow he must look out or Rex would eat him for breakfast. Rusty sat down quickly and looked up at him to see if that were a joke. He decided that it was, because this man was friendly, for he reached down and patted his head. That wasn't so nice as having an ear pulled, but he guessed they could get along all right, even if he did have to stand an occasional pat.

Having settled that matter in his own mind, Rusty spent the next ten minutes looking into every corner and even under the big safe. That was a nice place to know about if a big dog should chase him.

Only a little dog could crawl under that safe.

With all the corners and chairs looked over, Rusty found that by standing tip-toe on his hind legs and clinging to the window-sill with his front paws he could see people moving on the sidewalk. He was busily watching for his old master when he heard a new whistle.

Just three notes with the middle one high and the others low. "That's for you, Rusty," said his master, coming into the big office from his room. "Remember it after this. Come on now, and we'll drive home and see what is going to happen. I have an idea that you are not going to spend very much time here with me."

Tucking him under one arm, his new master went out into a yard where there was a big blue automobile. His master

got in and put Rusty on the seat beside him.

“Ever ride before, Rusty? You don’t act as if you had done so, but we will try, and see if you like it.”

Rusty was very sure that he should, for already it was very exciting with so much more to see from away up on the seat. His master moved a stick and there was a noise. Rusty didn’t quite know what that meant, so he gave one “yip” to show his master that he could help in the making of noise.

Then the car began to move. Rusty stood up. If one little bark had made that happen, surely a few more would make still more things happen, so he yipped and yipped.

“It’s all right to help, Rusty,” said his master with a laugh as he put one hand on the little dog’s collar. “But in the

best families people keep their seats while riding, and don't drive too fast. You've got us started, so sit down and be quiet and enjoy yourself."

That was too long a speech for Rusty to understand, but he knew that he hadn't done anything very wrong, because the tone of his master's voice was just what it always had been. A big dog was trotting along, and Rusty stuck his head out of the window and told him in dog talk to hurry and get out of the way of dogs that ride in automobiles. The big dog turned and looked at him as he dodged out of the street, and Rusty had to give him two jeering yips as he leaned as far as his master would let him out of the window and looked back at the other dog.

And while he was doing that the automobile stopped! Rusty whirled around to see what had happened.

“Here we are, Rusty. Here’s your home. Now we will see what they think about you. If they don’t want you, I’ll drive you right back and you’ll be with me every day. But if they do want you, I’m afraid I shall see you only when I am home.”

Rusty jumped up and gave his master a kiss. He just hoped “they” would not like him very much, because the office and his master and riding in an automobile were just what Rusty thought he loved above everything else.



CHAPTER II

RUSTY'S NEW MISTRESS

RUSTY's new master, Mr. Arthur Abbott, whistled a gay little tune and watched the front door of the house before which he had stopped the automobile. From somewhere in the house, Rusty and his master heard some one call, "Coming."

Rusty was excited because he was to meet some new person. It was such a

long time before the door opened that Rusty could not sit still. He got as close to the edge of the seat as he could, his fore feet on the edge of the door and his tail wagging very slowly.

At last the door opened, and there was the prettiest lady Rusty had ever seen. Dressed all in white, she was slim and smiling, and any little dog would have known that she was happy.

“Oh, you darling!” she cried, putting out her arms and hurrying down the steps towards the automobile.

“See him sit up, Arthur!”

“Sit up?” thought Rusty. “I’m not sitting up. I’m sitting down!” Then he remembered what his first master had taught him to do when he heard “sit up.” So up he went!

It was hard to sit up and wag his tail hard and fast and keep from jumping

right into the lady's arms before she got near him. She was hurrying, and when she was almost to the machine he heard her say in a little cuddling tone, "Come to me." Rusty put all his strength into one wild jump. For a few seconds he and the lady had a lively time, because she had not expected him to jump. But she finally got him cuddled in her arms, and snuggled her cheek down where he could kiss her again and again.

"It looks to me," said Mr. Abbott, "as if I had lost my dog. I bought him only an hour ago, and I told him that if you didn't like him, he could spend his time at the office with me. I just gave him a ride up here to see whether you would let me keep him."

Mr. Abbott's eyes twinkled as the lady backed away from the automobile so he couldn't reach the little dog.

“ You knew you couldn’t keep him after I saw him. What’s his name?—Rusty? —That’s a funny name for a shiny black dog. Oh, I see. Just one little rusty spot! Well, I don’t care about the name so long as I have him, dear,” she said. “ You may go back to your old office now, and Rusty and I will get acquainted. Does he know any tricks? How old is he? What shall I feed him? ”

“ Wait a minute,” said his master. “ One question at a time. Sneeze! ”

Rusty wasn’t quite sure that it was the proper thing to sneeze while in a lady’s arms so he looked up at her to see if she thought it would be all right. She was smiling at him, and when Arthur Abbott told him once more to sneeze, Rusty shut both eyes and sneezed the best sneeze he ever had sneezed.

How his new mistress did jump and

laugh! "He almost sneezed himself out of my arms," she cried.

But Rusty wanted them to know that he was perfectly willing to sneeze at any time. It was no trouble to show off what he knew. So he sneezed again, and was getting ready to give even a harder sneeze than the first ones when Mrs. Abbott stopped it by taking him by the nose, and laughed.

"The man I bought him of said he would sneeze, and sit up, and play dead, and roll over, and say his prayers, but he didn't tell me that he was liable to keep right on sneezing," said his master with a broad grin.

"Well, Janet, I've got to be getting back to the office, so give me Rusty and I'll be going."

"I shall not. You have lost Rusty. He's mine, and he stays right here at home

with me. You know you bought him for me. Didn't you, Arthur, dear? ”

Her husband just laughed and took hold of the stick that made the car go. Rusty wriggled a little when he saw him do that. He wanted to go, too. Then he thought it would be nice to see what was inside the house. So when the automobile started and his mistress called “ Good-bye,” Rusty barked two or three “ Good-byes ” of his own and Mr. Abbott laughed and told him he could go some other time.

As his mistress walked towards the house, Rusty found that she knew how nice it was for a little black spaniel to have one of his ears pulled just a little—a very little.

“ My,” she said, “ how clean you are! You must have had a bath. And Arthur carried you to the car, didn't he? ”

“Yip,” said Rusty.

And so, laughing at him for answering her, Janet Abbott opened the door to his new home and put him down on the floor very gently.

“Go anywhere you like, and see if you will like this for your new home,” she told him.

But Rusty hadn't waited to be told. No little dog does. The first thing he wants to do is to look and smell everywhere and learn for himself that there is nothing to hurt him.

Never before had Rusty been on polished floors or on rugs that slipped and slid when he tried to stop and turn quickly. When Mrs. Abbott put him down, he started to go upstairs, but he decided it would be better to see what was downstairs first, so he turned and ran into the big room, his nose close to the

floor. He learned that no other dog had been there.

Whoa! What was that? A cat smell! He tried to stop quickly, but the rug went right along when he dug his claws in. That frightened him, and he scratched and scrambled hard, but the rug just wrinkled up and kept going.

When he at last got off from it and on the slippery floor, he tried to race back to where he had caught that smell of a cat. His feet slipped and slid, and one went this way, and another that way, until he got tired and discouraged. When he stopped trying so hard, he was able to get along towards that smell.

“That’s right,” said his mistress, wiping her eyes because she had been laughing so heartily, “slow up. You can’t be in such a hurry on these floors and rugs, Rusty.”

He looked up at her, because he didn’t

quite know what she had said. She stooped down and held one hand towards him and he scrambled to her. She took him by the collar and pulled one ear gently and rubbed his head and told him again not to be frightened but to go more slowly and he would get along all right. But it was a long time before Rusty learned that he could not hurry in turning corners on those floors. Even after many years, when he was in a very special hurry he would forget, and his feet would slide out from under him and he would get a thump that sometimes made his head ache. Then he would remember.

His mistress let him go again, and he went hunting for that smell. He found that it led him right to a great big chair near the fireplace. He stood up and looked and smelled in the chair. Then he barked ever so quietly, just as a warning

to that cat that she had better keep out of his way or be ready to run.

“Yes,” said his mistress, “Mittens has been sleeping there, and you must learn to share things with her. She is a very nice, clean kitty and you are a very nice, very clean doggie, and we are all going to be very nice to you, so you two pets must learn to love each other.”

But Rusty did not pay any attention to that long speech. He couldn't understand it, anyway, so he kept right on following the scent of Mittens. It went right to a closed door and stopped. Rusty didn't know that the door had been open when Mittens had gone to it, so he followed the walls all around the room trying to find it again.

His mistress stood and watched him until he had been all around. Then she went into the room they had first entered,

and walked along the hall. Rusty raced ahead until he could not go any farther. But Mrs. Abbott opened a door into a large room in which was a big table and—yes, just a faint scent of something good to eat. His mistress could not smell it, but a dog with as sharp a nose as Rusty had could not help sniffing. He stopped short and raised his head and sniffed.

“Are you hungry so soon?” she asked. “Let’s go into the kitchen and see what Cook says about it.”

She opened another door, and how good things did smell! And how hungry he was! He couldn’t remember when he had not been just a little hungry, and right now, with all the exciting times of the morning and everything so new, he was almost starved—and so thirsty!

But he had never seen such a person as Cook. She was much bigger than his

mistress, and so black!—as black as Rusty, himself. And on top of her black head she had a red thing that reminded Rusty of that big yellow bow he had had to wear. He braced his legs to be ready to run if that seemed the best thing, and cocked his head on one side to look at her that way and see if his eyes had been fooling him. No, she looked just the same that way. She was just as big and just as black as he had first thought. He didn't know just what to make of her—and he was so thirsty!

When he stopped looking at Cook, he caught sight of a dish under the sink. Something must be in it that was good for dogs. He looked once more at the big black person who was making funny noises and rocking back and forth and laughing as he had never heard any one laugh before. But she looked as if she might like

a little dog—and he was so thirsty! He trotted to the dish.

“Heah!” cried the big black cook that his mistress had told him would see about getting him something to eat, and who certainly lived where there were nice smells, “you can’t hab Mittens’ lunch.” She grabbed the saucer away from him and put it on a shelf.

“You jes’ wait a minute and I’ll get you your own pussonal dish, Mr. Blackie. Lawdy, lawdy, what will Rex do to him when he sees him?” she laughed. “Is he yours, Miss Janet?” she asked as she waddled to a little room while Rusty stood watching, his tail moving just a little doubtfully as he waited to see what was going to happen.

“I’ll bet yo’ Mr. Arthur brought him on yer anniversa’y, now didn’t he, honey?”

Rusty really wasn’t paying any atten-

tion to what was being said. He was too busy watching to see if she was going to get him a drink. When she went to the sink and filled a little dish with the nicest, coldest water he had ever tasted he just dashed at it and lapped and lapped until he wasn't thirsty any more.

When he could stop and look around, both his mistress and Cook were sitting on chairs watching him. He trotted out into the middle of the floor. What was this? Dog! He looked all around quickly. Of course some dogs are nice, but this one he smelled might not be. It was best to be sure about such things. With no dog in sight he followed the scent to the outer door.

“Yah, yah,” laughed the big black person. “You smells Rex, you does. If he ever gits you, he’ll eat you right up in one bite,” she said, rocking her body back and

forth and laughing while she shook one fat finger at him.

Rusty didn't know just what she had said, but he did know that she was telling him something about that dog he had scented. Whether to believe that warning finger or her laughter was what puzzled him. He looked at his mistress.

"You needn't worry about good old Rex," she told him. "He's the best-natured St. Bernard in the whole world. He'll protect you instead of hurting you. Cook is only fooling."

Rusty immediately felt better as he wondered when he would meet Rex. It wasn't to be then, because his mistress invited him upstairs with her to see where he would sleep while she changed her dress.

In such a big house he had to make many stops and side trips before he finally

trailed his mistress into her room. She had not bothered him with constant calling but had left him to look around where he pleased before finding her.

Finding her when he was ready was the easiest thing in the world for a little dog, but she pretended to be very much surprised when he trotted into her room, where she was seated before a big mirror doing things to her hair. Rusty stood and watched her a minute.

“If you are very good you may come up here and sit right beside me on this bench while I finish doing my hair,” she said. He cocked his head to one side which meant: “I didn’t quite understand. Please say that again.”

The next time, when she put one hand on the bench at her side, she made it perfectly plain and he jumped up there. It was funny, Rusty found, to see hands that

ought to belong to his mistress move in the glass and yet every time he looked at her, her hands were with her right there beside him. It made it a little easier for him when she dropped one hand and pulled one ear ever so gently. She told him that if he would be real good he could sit there and help her every day when he wasn't doing something else.

When she got up from the bench she went to a little room that was full of things and brought out a nice soft cloth that she told him was his blanket and was not for any one else. She put it on the nearest one of two nice white beds and invited him to try it.

“That's where you are to sleep,” she told him, “and I think that after all the excitement this morning you had better have a little nap while I finish dressing.”

But Rusty didn't believe he was tired.

He had a lot more to do if he was to see everything in this new, big house. And there were Rex and Mittens he had not met.

But his mistress quite insisted that he should lie down and keep her company. She took his front legs in one hand and laid him down and petted him. After a minute or two, Rusty thought that about forty winks would not delay him very much. Besides, the blanket was nice and soft and it was on a bed. While he was thinking of the many nice things that had happened to him he fell almost asleep. But he managed to open one eye once in a while to satisfy himself that his mistress did not go somewhere and leave him.



CHAPTER III

RUSTY AND BETTY

HIS mistress moved about the room singing softly to herself, and Rusty tried hard to keep opening one eye every little while. There was so much he wanted to do that he could not afford to waste any time after his mistress was ready. But it became harder and harder to keep

awake, because it had been a very busy morning, and puppies get tired even if they don't think they do.

If you could have looked into that room an hour after Rusty had joined his mistress you would have seen a black silky-haired ball rolled up tight on a soft grey blanket. And if you had looked sharp you would have seen parts of it move with little quick jerks. That was Rusty, sound asleep and all alone in that big room, dreaming that he was scrambling over the rugs in that big front room downstairs and that they were slipping away from under him, try as hard as he could to keep on them. Mrs. Abbott had slipped out of the room leaving her tired puppy to have a nap. And Rusty had not known anything about her going.

“Mother. Coo-oo! Mother!”

Rusty sat up like a jack-in-the-box.

What was that? Who called? Where was he? Oh, yes. Here he was in that nice big room where he had helped his mistress dress. At least, he had meant to help her, but somehow he must have fallen asleep. He must have missed something.

“Coo-oo, Mother. I’m home!”

Rusty’s head cocked on one side. That was a new voice; a young voice. It sounded very much as if the owner would like to play, and if there was anything Rusty wanted to do right then, it was to play. He sprang from the bed and scampered towards the hall, his feet sliding and his toe-nails scratching on the floor before he remembered that he had got to turn corners a little slowly if he didn’t want to bump his head hard.

Down the stairs he rushed, half running, half falling, and very much excited. He landed on the rug at the foot and it slid

across the floor until he bumped into a big leg of a table. He was so surprised and a little hurt that he gave a quick yip even while his feet were trying to help him stand up to go to find whoever it was who was calling. Into the big room he dashed, slipping and sliding before he remembered again how those rugs acted. But above all the noise he was making he could hear that fresh young voice somewhere calling "Coo-oo, Mother!" He dashed into the room in back of the big front room where Mittens had gone. The door was open again.

Nobody was there! He couldn't see any way to get out except through the door he had come in. He stopped and listened. Another door into the room opened and there was his mistress who was just saying:

"Daddy brought me a nice ——"

Rusty saw some one else just as she saw him.

“Oh, you darling doggie!” the young girl cried, dropping on her knees on the rug and holding out her arms just as her mother had done that morning. It was very inviting.

“Daddy never brought this dog to you, Mother. He brought him to me, I know. You’ve got Rex and—what’s his name? Come to me,” she coaxed and patted her hands together gently.

This certainly is nice, thought Rusty. Here was some one else to like him, and he was sure she would like to run and play. He looked at his mistress, and then, when he saw her smiling, he dashed at the girl, leaped into her arms and kissed her and kissed her, while she laughed and exclaimed and pushed and mauled him around the way any puppy likes to be

played with, if his playmate does not get too rough.

“Daddy didn’t say anything about you, dear, when he brought Rusty. He said he had bought him for himself and brought him home to see if I would let him keep him. But, of course, he was only fooling. He really bought him for us all, Betty, and he’ll love you because you and your friends will romp and play with him. He has been here only a little more than an hour and he was so tired that I left him asleep on a blanket on the foot of my bed. He must have heard you calling, and come down to get acquainted.”

Rusty gave a little yip to say that he had done just exactly that. He jumped from Betty’s arms to run to her mother, stand up and put his paws on her dress to tell her that he was so glad to be surprised that way. She reached down and pulled

one of his ears ever so gently, and told him that he had better quiet down now because it was almost lunch time and he would have to learn to be very quiet if he was to sit in the dining-room with the family.

“He’s going to have a chair right beside mine,” said Betty. “You know, Mittens doesn’t like to stay on the chair, and I do love kitties and doggies so it seems as if I could have one of them with me when I eat.”

Rusty knew what “eat” meant and that word reminded him that he was very hungry. He promptly sat up and begged just as his first master had taught him to do for a bite of something as a reward.

“He’s almost starved!” exclaimed Betty. “See him beg! Did you teach him to do that?”

“Oh, no. He knows several tricks Daddy said, but I haven’t tried to have

him do any. I've been letting him get acquainted. Tell him to sneeze!"

Rusty looked from his big mistress to Betty because he did not know whether that was a command or not. Betty laughed and told him to sneeze. Rusty took a long breath, let the tears gather in his eyes, and sneezed hard.

Betty jumped up from the floor, ran to the dining-room and returned with a piece of cracker. Rusty promptly sat up and had the first thing to eat that he had had all the morning. It was so good that he swallowed it whole and begged for more.

Just then the front door opened to admit his master. Everybody ran to meet him; his mistress, his little mistress, and Rusty, all talking at once. Betty and her mother were each asking if Rusty wasn't her dog, while Rusty was announcing at the top of his voice that he belonged to

every one in the house, even to Cook, because she lived where there were nice smells and had given him a dish for water that was his very own.

Pretty soon they all went to the dinner table. A chair had been placed close to Betty's in which Rusty was invited to sit. He jumped up when Betty put one hand on it and told him to sit down and be a good dog. It was the first time he had ever been invited to sit at a table, so he watched very closely to see what should be done. It was very hard to sit still when all the others were eating and, although he was very hungry, he had nothing.

Soon Betty broke off a piece of her bread and gave it to Rusty. That bite made him turn from the table and face Betty. He could more easily watch his little mistress and be sure of not missing anything she might offer him. Betty was

begging so hard to remain at home that afternoon that she ate very little and quite forgot to feed her new pet. Rusty had never heard the word "school," and did not understand that Betty wanted to be allowed to stay with him. He did not know then how much he was to miss her almost every morning and every afternoon.

His big mistress told Betty that she ought to be allowed to have him to herself some of the time. If Betty were to stay home from school, she couldn't. Betty's father laughed a great deal about "my dog" that he had bought for himself, and every one else in the family claimed.

While they were so busy talking and laughing, Rusty noticed that Betty used only a part of her chair because she was not so very big. He saw that it would be much easier for her to feed him if he were

to sit on that part of her chair not occupied by Betty. He stepped over there from his chair, squeezed in behind his little mistress, and sat down.

When they all laughed, Rusty looked at his master to see if he really minded very much and would make him go back to his own chair. It was very nice to have a chair all to himself, but he was sure it was much nicer and much handier for Betty to use part of her chair. If she wanted to give him something, he could reach it and save her a lot of bother.

Betty moved a little forward on her chair and Rusty stuck his head under her right arm so that his mouth was very handy. He knew that would save her trouble and, besides, she liked to have him with her just as he certainly liked her. In fact, he liked everybody in the house and was ready and willing to sneeze or sit up

or do anything he could think of to please them.

Just to let Betty know that he would like another bite, Rusty put his head down and sneezed. Betty said she was sorry she had neglected him. She gave him a piece of meat that Rusty was sure she was ready to eat herself if he had not sneezed.

Mr. Abbott laughed and said that he didn't know but this dog-at-the-table business was going too far, if Rusty was going to sneeze over everything at the table. Betty explained that Rusty had put his head down below the table when he sneezed, and, besides, he didn't really sneeze but only made believe.

They said "sneeze" so often in talking that Rusty caught the idea that they wanted him to keep doing it. He tried again and once more Betty gave him a bite. When they stopped talking about

it Rusty stopped doing it. He kept his eyes on Betty's plate and every time she took a mouthful Rusty turned his head and watched until the bit of food had disappeared in Betty's pretty mouth. He didn't know that he looked disappointed until Mrs. Abbott said she had never seen such a sad expression on a dog's face as Rusty had each time Betty took a bite.

When every one had stopped eating, Rusty heard a little bell tinkle somewhere. He pricked up his ears to learn what that meant. He hadn't heard that noise before. In a minute the door that led to where Cook lived with her nice smells was opened and some one he had not seen before came into the room. She was almost as black as Cook, but not nearly so big. She had a white cap on her head, and she smiled at Rusty.

The little dog couldn't understand why

she took all the things that were left from the table to carry them to the room where Cook lived. He had not had very much to eat, yet she was taking it away from him. He watched every move while Betty talked about school and about Jennie and Pauline who would come home with her. Suddenly Rusty saw that this new person was bringing something more to eat from the Cook's room, and he squeezed along a little to get his nose as close to the plate as he could. He didn't want Betty to forget that he was there.

“ Oh, goody. Ice-cream! ” cried Betty.

“ Woof, ” said Rusty very softly.

Again every one in the room laughed, and Rusty looked first at his master, then at his big mistress, trying to think what it could be that they were laughing at. He liked to hear people laugh, and was always glad to make them.

“I guess Rusty agrees with you,” said Betty’s father when he could stop laughing. “But ice-cream is one thing we shall not serve him at the table. We are all forgetting our table manners, it seems to me.”

“Oh, please, Daddy, let him sit here. We’ll both be good and I will give him only a bite of a cookie now and then.”

Betty was holding a piece of a cookie in her right hand while she talked. She had taken one little bite of it but was so interested in talking to her father that she had forgotten how hungry little dogs can get when others are eating.

Rusty saw that cookie held right in front of his nose. It smelled good and, besides, Betty had the ice-cream. He stretched his neck ever so slightly and—presto! the cookie was gone.

Betty’s father saw him do it and

laughed again. Betty's Daddy loved to laugh.

"You'll have to learn to eat with your left hand," he said, "or you will not have much yourself if you are going to tuck Rusty under your right arm."

But Betty said she was not worrying about getting enough to eat, for Rusty would soon learn good manners and not take anything that was not offered to him.

"Perhaps," said Betty's mother, "if you had not been holding some food in your hand while you were talking you would not have tempted Rusty to grab it."

And Mr. Abbott said that he thought the dog might teach them all some things they would do well to remember.



CHAPTER IV

RUSTY MEETS MITTENS

WHEN the others at the table had finished eating all they wanted, or all that was good for them, Rusty was still very hungry. He had had only a few nibbles besides the big bite of cookie that he had snatched for himself.

Mr. Abbott went around the table to Betty's chair to pull first one of Rusty's

ears and then the other as he asked him if he was ready to go with him for a ride to the office. Rusty's tail said that he would like very much to go, but his master ought to know that, while he had had all he needed to eat, a little dog was very hungry.

Rusty need not have worried about not having enough to eat. Both Mrs. Abbott and Betty exclaimed that Rusty had not had his dinner. "Besides," said Betty, "I want him here when I come home from school this afternoon because Jennie and Pauline are coming home with me to teeter and to meet Rusty."

"But," objected her Daddy, his eyes twinkling with fun, "they do not know that you have Rusty."

"No, I know that," replied Betty. "But they will as soon as I meet them on my way to school. We always go along together, you know, and we always tell

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each other any good news. And Rusty is good news; just gorgeous good news," she exclaimed, stooping to catch up Rusty for a hug and kiss before favoring her Daddy with another.

Kissing his wife and daughter, Mr. Abbott said good-bye to Rusty, promising him that some day when no one was looking he would take him to the office with him where they would have a grand time. Rusty ran to the window of the big front room, where by stretching every muscle of his little body while he pulled with the claws of his fore feet on the window-sill he was able to see his master get into the car and move that stick that made it go. Rusty watched until he had disappeared around the corner before thinking again about being hungry.

Betty, in a hurry, picked him up, "so he can kiss me good-bye," she told her

mother before she went out to join Jennie and Pauline on their way to school. There Betty was to study and recite as best she could while thinking about Rusty and the good times they would have while she was at home and, best of all, during the long summer vacation. Rusty again stood at the window until Betty had gone out of his sight. Then once more he remembered how hungry he was.

“Now,” said his big mistress when Rusty turned away from the window, “we’ll see what can be done about something to eat for a little dog I know. There was too much excitement while Betty and her Daddy were home for you to have time to eat.”

When Mrs. Abbott started towards the room in which Rusty had sat in Betty’s chair he trotted along hoping that he would be allowed to go on into the room

where Cook lived with all those nice smells. So he wagged his tail as fast as he could, trotted close at her side, and kept his eyes on her every step of the way.

She passed the table and Betty's chair, where Rusty stopped a second to make sure that nothing had been dropped on the floor, and opened the door into the room of the nice smells.

"Yas'm," Cook said, "I'se got his dinner right yere for the little tyke on his own special plate right side ob Mittens'. They'se goin' to eat right side ob each odder."

Rusty remembered where his dish of water had been placed under the sink. Being thirsty as well as hungry, he trotted there to find a dish with lots of good things to eat. He began to eat hurriedly when Cook stopped him with a shout.

"Heah. You let that alone. That's

Mittens' dinner. Heah's yours in this nice big dish."

Hungry as he was, Rusty backed away. He didn't know what being shouted at like that meant. His tail drooped as he looked up at his mistress who was watching him but not saying anything.

Cook got down on the floor and moved the larger dish a little towards Rusty telling him to come and get his own dinner. "Dat's yo' dish," she explained in a friendly voice, "an' yo' mustn't eber touch anything on dis one, 'cause dat's Mittens'."

Rusty's tail moved a trifle but he was still doubtful of Cook because she had shouted at him. She was the same person, he remembered, who had shook a finger at him and told him about Rex, the big dog that might eat him at one bite. He took a step towards the plate as Cook snapped her fingers at him and coaxed. He was so

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hungry that he moved another step towards the plate and then still another. In a minute he was eating just as fast as he could.

Cook petted him, telling him at the same time that he would never be hungry after he came to her kitchen and told her about it. Rusty decided that she would be nice to a little dog. Having settled that matter, he devoted himself to his meal in good earnest.

When a spaniel puppy is eating or drinking, his big ears flop forward so far that he is unable to see what is going on at either side of him. When Rusty raised his head once to chew an extra nice bit of food, he stopped suddenly and jumped back.

He had seen a beautiful big cat eating from a dish right beside his own. Kitties have small ears, and Mittens—for it was

Mittens—had been watching Rusty every second. When he jumped back, her tail jumped in size, her back went up, and she crouched with one front paw raised, every claw showing.

Rusty was surprised. He never chased a cat unless it started to run. And whenever cats got tired of running and stopped, Rusty always stopped to sniff around, as if he had been looking for something else all the time. In fact, Rusty rather liked cats; that is, cats that were nice to him.

No one said anything. Rusty looked up at his mistress to see what she thought about such actions on the part of a very nice clean tiger kitty with four white feet which looked as if she had drawn on white mittens.

“Yah, yah,” laughed Cook. “Mittens says for you not to get rambunctious-like

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wid her, or she'll scratch dat nose ob yours."

Rusty looked quickly at Cook, then right back at Mittens. He didn't dare not to watch Mittens for fear she would reach him with her sharp claws. But Mittens had put down her paw, and the hair on her back and tail had begun to lie down again. She saw that Rusty was not such a dog as she had known in the neighborhood. Some of the neighbors' dogs had not been nice to her. This one, she decided, acted like quite a nice dog. With her friend, Cook, and her mistress in the room, Mittens stepped back to her dish to finish her meal.

Rusty decided that if Mittens lived in this nice house with such kind people he would rather be friends with her, so that she would play with him when Betty and her friends were not around. So he turned around a little that his ears might not hide

Mittens from his sight, took a quick bite, and looked up. Mittens was drinking her milk, although she was keeping watch of Rusty instead of looking at her dish. In another minute they were both acting as if they had been in each other's company for weeks, instead of having just been introduced at dinner.

"I guess, Mandy, that they will get along together after a little while," said their mistress. "Rusty is a very lovable dog, and we know how nice Mittens is. Now, Mandy, you are to remember that you are not to feed Rusty every time he asks for something or does some trick. He will sneeze for anything."

Rusty was licking his mouth as he watched his mistress. Hearing that word of command he braced himself and sneezed as hard as he could, which was very hard.

Poor Mittens! With that sneeze so un-

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expected she left her milk and went up into the air as only a cat can jump when frightened. It was just as if Rusty's sneeze had blown Mittens up. Terribly frightened, she spit at him, while her hair and tail again stood straight up and her right fore paw was raised to strike.

Rusty was even more surprised than Mittens was frightened. He had done only what he had understood he was told to do, yet Cook was lying face down across the table, saying "Yah, yah!" as she slapped the table with her big fat hands. His mistress had picked him up and was laughing, while Mittens was backed in a corner, wild-eyed with fright. And all because Rusty had sneezed!

"Mandy, I forbid you ever to say sneeze ——"

Rusty heard his mistress use that word again. Promptly he sneezed. Mrs. Ab-

bott caught him by the nose and hurried out of the room, laughing until the tears came. Until she had carried him into the big front room with two doors shut behind them, he could hear Cook in the kitchen slapping the table and laughing.

It was more than Rusty could understand. He had done only what he thought his mistress had told him to do, yet he had frightened Mittens and made two friends laugh until they cried.



CHAPTER V

RUSTY MEETS REX

“I WISH I knew whether you would stay with me,” said Rusty’s mistress, after that exciting time in the kitchen when he had met Mittens at dinner and both had been surprised. “I think I had better have you on a leash until you learn to stay here at home,” she said as she stood look-

ing at Rusty, now lying on a rug in the big front room.

Mrs. Abbott got a long leather strap with a metal clasp on one end and snapped it to Rusty's collar. That was something new for Rusty. He had no idea where he could be going or why he should be tied to his mistress. He had no wish to leave her, unless for a minute or two to chase a cat—if the cat would run—or to try to find something exciting in the many scents and smells he might run across.

He was very sober as they went out of a side door on to a big lawn. That was enough to make any little dog that never had had a chance to run on the grass tug and pull and jump to get away from that strap. Rusty wasn't trying to run away, but only to run and romp as children do when they are released from school on a pleasant day.

His mistress told him not to be in too much of a hurry. She said that in a few days, after he knew everybody and everything around their home, he could run and race as much as he liked, but just now she wanted him to go with her to the garage and meet Rex.

Rusty stopped short. His mistress was talking about that big dog Cook had said might eat him at one bite. He looked up at Mrs. Abbott, head cocked on one side, to ask her whether she thought it would be quite safe for him to get near that big dog. She seemed to know what he meant, for she told him that Rex was the best-natured dog in the whole world and would be glad to have a little dog for a chum. While she was telling him that, they were walking towards the garage and, the doors being open, Rusty saw an automobile in there and he thought that meant they were

going for a ride. Rusty had had his first ride that morning, and he was sure the most exciting thing that could happen to a dog was to ride in a big car.

Trying to hurry his mistress along to the car, he gave a harder jump than he had been giving and it snatched the strap right out of Mrs. Abbott's hand.

"Oh!" she cried. "Catch him, James. Don't let our new little dog run away! Come, Rusty. Come here."

When a man came hurrying to the door of the garage, Rusty stopped short. What a lot of people there were to meet and make friends with in this new home of his! His tail wagged very slowly because he was not sure about this man. He cocked his head on one side trying to make up his mind whether this man, James, was to be just a man he knew, or a real friend.

"Hello, there," said James. "Where

did you get that little tyke, madam?" he asked as he sat down on his heels and snapped his fingers. "Come, see me," he invited.

But just then the biggest dog Rusty had ever seen came from somewhere in the garage and stood beside the man. Rusty backed up a step. What a giant that dog was! His mouth was open, his tongue hung out, and his tail was still. That didn't make him look any too friendly to Rusty, suddenly remembering that his mistress had said, "Come here!"

He whirled around and got behind her. He had been taught that was the proper place for a dog when walking with its master or mistress. But it was so exciting to come to a new home and meet so many people who liked you, and Mittens who surprised you, and now Rex, this big dog, that it was no wonder he had forgotten for

a minute all the things he had been told to do.

But now that he had seen Rex and found how big he really was and what a big mouth he had, it was easy to remember that masters or mistresses will always protect you if you only stay with them. That was really the reason why Rusty scooted behind Mrs. Abbott, and it was nothing that should have made James and his mistress laugh so heartily.

“I’m not sure, James,” she said, “whether that’s what he has been trained to do, or whether he is just there because Rex frightened him. Mittens frightened him, and then he scared her nearly to death when he sneezed. He ——

“O dear, you can’t mention that word or he will sneeze his head off.”

You see, Rusty heard that word again and he was so anxious to please every-

body that he had promptly sneezed. How James did laugh! And how Rex did prick up his huge ears, say “Woof” gently, and wag his tail a very little.

His mistress picked up her end of the strap and went closer to Rex. “Come, Rex,” she said, “and meet your new friend.”

“Rex has been a little jealous, I guess,” said James, “seeing you with another dog. But they’ll be great friends, ma’am, because Rex will never touch a little feller like him. Come on, little feller—what’d you say his name is, ma’am?”

Mrs. Abbott told him, and stooped a little to pat Rex’s head, while Rusty tugged at the leash to get as far away as he could. He was not sure that Rex might not do just what that big black cook had said he would—eat him up at one bite.

But Rex was not paying much attention to him. He was very content to stand there and have his head patted. Rusty mustered up courage and moved one step at a time a little nearer.

“I’ll have to teach him some tricks,” said James. “Those little fellers learn quickly, and they never forget. I’ve seen lots of ’em.”

“Mr. Abbott said that he knew how to sit up and beg, play dead, and roll over,” said his mistress, “besides that trick you saw and heard him do a minute ago.”

Rusty and Rex by that time were having a whispered talk. They agreed that if they both must live in the same place they might as well be friends first as last. They were not paying a bit of attention to what was being said, because they were so busy with their own affairs. In fact they had not noticed that James had come close

to them until suddenly he said, "Dead dog!"

Rex stopped whispering to Rusty, looked up at James, groaned and slowly let his huge body down to the ground. Rusty looked at him very much surprised.

"Dead dog, Rusty," said James again.

Rusty remembered then. He'd show them how to do that. Quick as a wink he flopped on one side, shut his eyes tight and stiffened his legs out straight. When he did a trick, he wasn't as slow about it as Rex, he'd have them know. He had just understood that Rex was playing "dead dog." But, Rusty told himself, Rex hadn't done it half so well as he had. Any one could see that, he was sure, and he opened one eye to see if they had been watching him. They were, both of them.

"That dog has been well trained," said

James, "and he's only a puppy. He'll be a great chum for Miss Betty, ma'am, and I'll teach him some new tricks. He's a well-bred dog. You can tell from the looks of him. And he's so knowin'. I don't know what he was taught for the word to get up, but maybe it is the same that I taught Rex."

He slapped his hands together. "All right. Wake up!" he said.

Rusty was on his feet in one bound with a joyous little yip. But Rex was comfortable, and just raised his head to tell James that he heard and understood, but he thought he might as well take it easy on such a warm day.

Rusty looked at James, then at his mistress, and then at Rex. He had been taught to mind, and he did not understand why Rex did not get up when he was told to do so. He trotted over to him and

smelled of him. Finding nothing the matter he barked sharply right in one ear which made his mistress and James laugh.

“Let him alone,” said James. “When you are as old as he is and need cool weather to be really comfortable, you won’t be so smart, perhaps.”

“I shall, too,” barked Rusty. “I do what I’m told, and every dog ought to when he understands what you mean. Rex knew what you meant just as I did, but he’s too lazy to do it.”

“Now, Rusty,” said his mistress, “there is just one thing you must not do, and I want you to understand it. You must not plague Rex. He’s willing to have you live here, and because he did not get up again when it is so hard for him to do much in warm weather does not give you a right to find fault with him. Let him lie there and try and keep cool and you come along into

the house with me and have a nap before Betty gets home. You'll have all the exercise you need then."

A few minutes later Rusty was curled down on his blanket on the foot of Mrs. Abbott's bed, sound asleep. He was dreaming of Mittens and Rex when he suddenly sat up, wide awake. He gave those long ears of his a great shake to straighten them out and listened again.

"Hi, Rusty. Hi, Rusty. Come and play!" That was Betty's voice.

Off the bed he jumped, and scratched and slipped and tumbled out into the hall and down the stairs until he landed all in a heap and mixed up with Betty's legs and the legs of Jennie and Pauline, who had come to make his acquaintance and to play with him.

What a time he had kissing and being kissed by the three girls and barking and

jumping until Betty's mother came to them and told them to go outdoors, because she could not hear herself think "with you girls and the puppy all shouting at the top of your voices."

Out into the yard shot Rusty when Betty opened the door. He had no strap hitched to him now, and there was no reason why he couldn't run and race as much as he wanted to. So that's just what he did. He scurried as fast as his little legs would take him in one direction, stopped suddenly and raced back, telling the girls with little yips that they would have to be very fast to play with him, for he was a good runner and clever at dodging.

Mrs. Abbott came to the door and warned Betty not to let Rusty get away for he was not used to his new home yet and might try to find his way back to

where he had come from. There was no way for Rusty to tell her that he wouldn't run away; that he couldn't be driven away from that house, so he dashed down into the back yard towards the garage to show that he knew where he belonged.

The three girls raced after him, but stopped at the big teeter-board on which they often played in the shade. Jennie was a big girl, and she got on one end while Betty and Pauline, who were smaller, got on the other. Rusty didn't know what to make of that. It was something he didn't know anything about. First Betty was down where he could kiss her, and then she was away up in the air. That was very strange. He barked to tell her so, and to show how much he would like to play that game with them.

"Oh, let's put Rusty in the middle and see if he likes it," cried Betty. The girls

stopped the teeter and Betty reached down and picked her new pet up and placed him on the wide plank. Then she and Ruth pushed with their feet and Rusty felt himself going up in the air. He yipped excitedly and shook himself to tell Betty to let go of him. When she took her hand away, he started along the plank because Jennie was calling him, but when he got in the middle, he stopped because one minute Jennie was away up in the air, and the next she was down close to the ground.

He stopped there to figure out just what was happening. He liked the gentle rise and fall he got there in the middle, and he stayed right there for a long time. It was the first of many hundreds of times that Rusty teetered in the back yard of the Abbott home with Betty and her friends.



CHAPTER VI

RUSTY MAKES SOME RULES

A WEEK after Rusty had met everybody at the Abbotts', he had made some rules that all the members of the family obeyed. He first decided that he must have two beds. Betty, of course, went to bed before any one else. Having kissed Daddy and Mother good-night, Rusty raced ahead of her upstairs.

Because he insisted upon going to bed

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with Betty, her mother had placed an old blanket on the foot of Betty's bed. The first thing Betty did each night after reaching her room was to undress Rusty. He sat with his head held up while his little mistress unbuckled his collar. He had to shake very hard to make the hair on his neck feel good after the collar was off. That done, he picked up the collar and dropped it in the corner by the door ready to grab in the morning.

Having got Rusty ready for bed, Betty began slowly to undress, for she never was in a hurry to go to bed. But Rusty, after a hard day of play, was always ready to go to bed with the first person to retire for the night. And he was always so tired that he couldn't possibly jump up on the bed! Having put his collar in the proper place, he sat close to the bed and yawned, but Betty paid no attention. Twisting

his head away around, he yawned loudly again, his eyes almost closed, he was so sleepy! He sneezed, but Betty did not seem to hear. At last he sat up, put his paws against the bedclothes, and buried his nose in them. Then Betty saw him!

“Amen,” she said.

But Rusty did not jump around as he usually did after he had done one of his tricks. He was so tired that he let himself sink back on his haunches, head down and eyes just barely open! Betty then lifted him up and tucked him under the blanket, no matter how warm the night was. When she had kissed him good-night, Rusty, with a happy little sigh, snuggled down for a short sleep.

It was just a short nap with Rusty, because when Mrs. Abbott came upstairs to her room she always looked in on Betty and Rusty to see that they were tucked in

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for the night. No matter how still she was, Rusty always waked, jumped down, and trotted into his big mistress's room where he waited to be lifted up on the bed. But he didn't say his prayers there. Once a night was enough for him, especially as he usually said them once or twice a day for Cook when trying to wheedle something to eat from her.

Rusty having found that Mr. and Mrs. Abbott arose in the morning much earlier than Betty, kept right on pretending to sleep. Betty was allowed to sleep as late as she could without being late for school. As he had learned that there was nothing for him to eat at the table until she was there, he could see no reason to go down until his little mistress was heard to hurry down to get her breakfast.

Then, scrambling into her room, catching up his collar, with the buckle banging

on every stair, against the wall, and the door, he dashed into the dining-room and up on Betty's chair, wide-awake and so hungry!

"The idea of you coming to breakfast undressed," Mrs. Abbott said to him each morning, looking at him as if much surprised.

"If you will bring your collar to me I will put it on for you, but next time you must remember to get up early enough to be dressed before breakfast."

Down Rusty jumped, trotted to the side of his big mistress while she put his collar on, pulled an ear, and petted him. Then back to Betty's chair he went, where no sooner had he poked his nose under her arm than a bite of toast or a bit of roll was waiting for him. Betty did not look. She kept right on eating, but somehow Rusty got quite a number of bites. Betty

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finished with a rush, pushed back her chair, and gave Rusty a hug and kiss, with another for her mother as she hurried away.

After the first day or two, Rusty learned that it was useless to follow her. He couldn't go to school, so why should he leave the table? He hoped that some day some one would give him a bite if he behaved himself and was very patient. But his big mistress, who sometimes sat at table a few minutes after Betty had left, never gave him anything.

When the door opened to admit the maid, Rusty still hoped that she would be good enough to give him a scrap of something, it made no difference what, that had been left on a plate. He did not know that his big mistress had told Sarah that he must not be fed except in the kitchen. Patiently he waited each day until everything had been cleared from the table and

Sarah held the door open for him as she told him his breakfast was waiting for him.

He trotted through the door and straight to the one leading from the cellar where he sat down and looked reproachfully at Cook.

“Wal, I ’clare,” she said every morning. “Ob c’ose you-all cain’t eat nuthin’ ’til yo lady-love is at de table. C’ose not. Wha’d yo’ s’pose I’s thinkin’ ’bout not to hab dat do’ open?”

Waddling across the floor Mandy opened the door for Mittens to step into the kitchen, her ears laid back as if angry about something. But she wasn’t. She had prepared for Rusty’s moist kisses, one on each side of her head.

Mittens did not kiss him in return but she expected and received every morning Rusty’s greetings before they walked across the floor side by side and began

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their breakfast. No one ever knew whether Rusty told her that he already had had a few bites at the table. But if he had, Mittens would have laughed and told him that a few bites were nothing, for she had caught a nice fat mouse while he was sleeping.

One morning not long after Rusty had made the Abbott home his own, he grew tired of play in the back yard. Seeing Rex standing at the kitchen door, he raced up the steps to learn why Rex was asking to get into the house. That was forbidden him, Rusty knew. But he didn't know that Cook sometimes let him in for just a few minutes.

Rex's nose was close to the crack in the door. Rusty put his nose there and sniffed. He got a nice smell that never before had come to him from the kitchen. He looked up to ask Rex what it was. But Rex was

not talking to little dogs then. He was saying “Woof” very softly; a secret signal, Rusty guessed. And he was right.

Because, while he was trying to decide what wonderful food it could be that smelled so good, the door opened a little and Cook peeked through the crack.

“Whafer yo’ here, Mr. Rex?” she asked.

“Woof.”

“You know it’s ’gainst de rules to admit yo’ to my kitchen and—my goodness—who’s dat wif yo’? I cain’t hab de whole neighborhood in here!”

“Woof,” said Rex.

“Yip,” said Rusty, hoping to help.

“Yo’ll hab to do all yo’ tricks, Mr. Rex, if I’m gwine to waste one ob my doughnuts on you!”

“Woof,” replied Rex.

“Yip,” added Rusty.

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The door was opened wide. Rex marched in and Rusty bounded in, to begin sniffing all around. He found the smell came from the stove and from the table.

“Now, you Rusty,” said Cook, shaking her finger at him, “yo’ve had yo’ breakfast and Rex eats only once a day ’cept when I makes my doughnuts. Dis is his show. Yo’ unnerstand dat!”

Rusty’s tail said that he knew all about it, but to please hurry up and let him see it.

Cook reached up on a shelf over the table for a lump of sugar she had there and walked to where Rex was sitting in the middle of the floor. Rusty trotted along to see what was going to happen. Only once had he had a lump of sugar, one that had fallen on the floor and which he had picked up. . It had been very tasty,

even if Mrs. Abbott had told him that it was not good for little dogs. Maybe Cook did not know that!

Rex sat motionless while Cook placed the lump on his nose. Being so close to his eyes, he was obliged to look cross-eyed at it, but he did not move. He sat very still. But Rusty didn't. He sat up, begged, sneezed, rolled over, and played dead dog, but Cook paid no attention to him.

Cook left Rusty and Rex in the middle of the floor while she sat down in her big chair. Something was going on that Rusty did not understand. He did not know whether to follow Cook or stick close to Rex. If Rex wasn't going to eat that sugar, Rusty would. In a minute Cook said "one." Nothing happened. "Two," she said. Still Rex sat motionless.

"Three!"

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Rex tossed the lump of sugar into the air and when it came down it disappeared in his mouth.

Rusty yipped with delight. That was a trick he didn't know, but he believed in applauding when a good trick was well done. Rex paid no attention to Rusty's excited applause. He turned his huge body around and faced the stove.

"Wal," said Cook, getting up from her chair, "I s'pose I'se got to gib yo' one, but it ain't good for you, and yo' knows it."

With a long-handled fork she lifted out one of those things she had called doughnuts from the boiling fat. She let it drip a moment, then tossed it into the air.

Rex, his lips curled back, caught it between his teeth, holding the doughnut until it had cooled enough to eat without burning himself.

Rusty, much excited, jumped and barked at Rex and Cook, telling them that he could do that if he had a chance. Cook told him he must hush or she would not allow him in her kitchen again, and that he could not have a doughnut, because it was not good for him. While she was telling Rusty all that, Rex had eaten his doughnut, walked to the door and asked to have it opened.

Rusty started to follow but turned back to try to persuade Cook to give him something. He sneezed, he spoke softly and he rolled over but Cook did not even look at him. At last he jumped up in Cook's chair, put his fore paws on one arm, his head between them and prayed. But Cook was not to be persuaded.

"Yo' can sneeze yo' head off," she told him, "but yo' ain't goin' to get nothin' to eat from me. I'se had my orders, and I

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ain't gwine to get into no trouble for any little dog what nobody cares nothin' about."

Rusty was much hurt. Getting down from the chair, his tail drooping, he walked to the door leading to the dining-room and asked very softly, "Please open this door."

Cook waddled to it, but before she opened it she stooped down, pulled one of Rusty's ears, and said:

"Don't go off mad, Rusty. I'll skimp a leetle on de ice-cream to-night, and after dinner you come out here and I wouldn't be a bit s'prised if yo' found some."

Rusty felt much better when he heard that. As he trotted into the front of the house to find his mistress, he knew that he would remember to slip into the kitchen after dinner. If there was any one thing that Rusty liked, it was ice-cream.



CHAPTER VII

RUSTY IN MISCHIEF

RUSTY was not satisfied to do only the tricks that he had been taught. He invented some of his own, and one of them was mopping the kitchen floor. He delighted to pester Cook when she was sweeping or mopping, by catching hold of the broom or mop and swinging it back and forth. Cook learned not to leave a towel or her apron where Rusty could

reach it. He was sure to use whatever he could get hold of for a mop.

But one day Cook left the kitchen doors all shut while she went to the garage. Rusty was with his mistress and a caller. But he had just got up from a nap and insisted on playing, so his mistress told him to go and play with Cook until Betty got home. She opened the kitchen door for him, and closed it after him without noticing that Cook was not in the room.

Once or twice Mrs. Abbott thought she heard some unusual noise in the kitchen, but smiled and explained to her friend that Cook and Rusty were having a romp. And yet when, just as she closed the front door after her guest, she heard a shout from Cook she wondered if everything was as it should be. She hurried to the kitchen.

There was Cook standing just inside

the outer door looking as if she could not make up her mind whether to laugh or cry. Rusty was in the middle of the floor with Cook's big apron, very dirty and wet, spread out in front of him while he held one of the strings in his mouth. He was looking at Cook, his tail barely moving in that questioning way of his, while he waited to know whether he was to be praised or scolded.

Cook had just mopped her kitchen floor and left everything spick and span when she went to the garage. She had washed Mittens' and Rusty's dishes and put them back under the sink. Mittens' dish she had filled with milk, and Rusty's with fresh water. But she had not put back in place an open package of Gold Dust she had been using. She had left that standing on a corner of the kitchen table.

Rusty, disgusted because he was not allowed to play with his mistress's visitor, and not finding Cook in the kitchen, had taken a swallow or two of his fresh water and looked around for something to do.

He wanted to play, and there was no one to play with. He smelled Cook's apron and pulled it down to the floor from the chair on which it had been left. When he switched it on the floor, the idea came to him that with no one there to stop him he could mop that floor just as he had always wanted to, and have a good time while doing it. He snatched the apron this way, then that, just as he had seen Cook swish the mop about. He dragged it over near the sink and while he was swishing it around upset both the dish of water and Mittens' dish of milk.

He was a little surprised to discover the milk and water running on the floor,

and stopped for a minute. He lapped a little of the mixed milk and water, but he wasn't thirsty and he went back to his mopping. The apron was a little heavier now, because most of it was wet. He had to swing it harder than at first, and suddenly over went the box of Gold Dust, spilling its contents liberally.

Too busy now to notice that, he shook the apron harder and faster and in a minute he saw there was funny-looking stuff on the floor. If he could do all that without half trying, he wondered what might happen if he really went to work. He took a new hold on the apron and furiously worked it back and forth until almost the whole kitchen floor was covered with bubbling milky suds.

That was when Cook opened the door and shouted at him. And it was the picture his mistress saw when she opened the

other door to learn what Cook was making such a loud noise about.

His mistress stood there a second before she laughed. That told Rusty that everything was all right. He dropped the apron and dashed for her. When she dodged through the door and shut it in his face, he was very much surprised. He listened while she called through the door to Cook to put Rusty outdoors and while she explained how she had shut Rusty out there thinking that Cook was there. She was very, very sorry, she said. Then Rusty heard her laugh again.

“You mis’able little scamp, you,” scolded Cook. “You ruined ma apron and ma nice, clean floor. An’ you spilled Mittens’ milk jes’ when she needs it most ’cause she’s got a fambly to s’port now. An’ look at yo’s’e’f, all water and milk and suds. You go right to James and tell

him to clean you up, you naughty dog.”

Cook came into the room and pointed to the open door. “Go right straight out ob ma kitchen an’ don’t you eber ask me no mo’ for anything to eat. No, sir. You can do all ob your tricks all ob de time, an’ I’m nebber goin’ to gib you nothin’ mo’ to eat. Git out ob here!”

Rusty didn’t believe all Cook had said, but he knew that his mopping of the floor was not exactly what could be called a success. He trotted outdoors wondering what in the world to do with himself until Betty got home. He would rather have Betty wash him than James, because Betty laughed and played with him. When James washed him, he made a business of it—and such a thorough business. You didn’t have any play when James gave you a bath.

He shook himself and sprinkled the back piazza before he trotted down into the yard. Rex was probably in the garage where it was cool, but Rusty didn't intend to go to the garage, because the minute James saw him he would want to know how a dog that lived in a nice house could get so wet and dirty as he was. Even Rex kept cleaner, and he lived in a garage, James would tell him. Rusty had heard enough scolding for a few minutes, so he trotted around to the front yard where he could watch for Betty. He longed for her.

Looking for something to play with, Rusty discovered that the front gate had been left unlatched and a bit open. The gate was one thing the Abbotts had been very particular about since Rusty had made his home there. Here it was open, and Rusty had never been out in the street

except with Betty, and then he had been on the end of a leash.

Everything was new outside. He stuck his nose out and looked up and down the street. With Cook busy cleaning the kitchen, James in the garage, and his mistress probably telling Cook how sorry she was about the mess Rusty had made, there was no one to tell him to stay in the yard. He put one foot out on the sidewalk and looked to see what could be seen.

He grew bolder and went through the gateway. Away up the street he saw an automobile, a queer-looking machine standing at the curbing. He knew it was an automobile. Perhaps if he went up to it he might get a ride. He had been to ride only once or twice and he did like it. He started trotting along the sidewalk. As he got nearer, he saw something on the sidewalk close to the machine.

He hurried a little. He caught the smell like that in the kitchen when Cook made doughnuts, only it wasn't so strong. He trotted faster, his nose telling him that he was getting closer and closer to the place where the doughnut smell came from. Cook wouldn't give him a doughnut, even if she did give Rex one once in a while. He had begged and done all his tricks, one after the other, but Cook would just laugh and give him a bite of cracker or a bit of a cookie, just what he could get from Betty at any time. Even Betty would not give him a bite of a doughnut. Now he was on the trail of some, and Cook wasn't around to tell him he couldn't have one!

At first he didn't see any one with the automobile, although he looked sharp. He trotted up close to the basket that was on the sidewalk, and there it was full of

doughnuts! He licked one to see if it tasted as good as it smelled, just as a man who had been seated in the cab of the delivery truck stepped to the sidewalk with a book in one hand and a pencil in the other. He saw Rusty!

“Here. Get away from there!” he shouted.

Rusty thought he might want to play, and crouched down ready to dodge and run. The man thought Rusty was getting ready to jump at him and he began looking for something to throw.

Rusty didn't understand that, but if the man really cared anything about those doughnuts he would have come towards him instead of looking behind him. Rusty grabbed at one and got two. Then he turned tail and ran for home as fast as he could. And that was very fast for a little short-legged dog, because he could hear

the man yelling, and Rusty thought he was being chased. If he had known that the man was really shouting with laughter, he would not have hurried so fast that he ran right past his gate before he could stop.

He turned around and scrambled back as fast as he could, and ran around to the back of the house and up the steps to the kitchen where Cook was grumbling and mopping her floor for the second time that afternoon. The door was open, but the screen door was closed, which prevented Rusty from getting in to show Cook that he had a doughnut, whether she liked it or not.

He stood looking in and wagging that stump of a tail of his, but Cook was busy and didn't see him. He found it hard to speak with two doughnuts in his mouth but he could whine a little which he had

discovered always brought him help quickly.

Cook heard him and stopped her work. She looked at him and his mouthful with astonishment. "Where you get dem doughnuts?" she demanded, starting for the door.

Rusty backed away for her to open the door and let him dodge in. But Cook knew that trick. She didn't intend to have him on her freshly mopped floor again. But she was curious. With her mop in one hand, she unlatched the door with the other. Flourishing her mop, she drove Rusty back until she could get her big body through the door and close it.

"Come here, you rascalion," she ordered him. "Gimme dem doughnuts. Dey ain't fitten fer a dog to eat."

Rusty didn't intend to let go of those doughnuts without having at least a bite.

He was willing Cook should have one of them if she felt so bad about it. He had intended to take only one, anyway. He dropped them on the piazza, grabbed one of them again, and ran down the steps where he took a big bite and tasted it. Cook picked up the other and broke it open.

“Humph,” she said. “Baker’s truck. You nebber did hab no taste in vittals no-how, you good-for-nothin’ black dog, you. Any dog that likes baker’s truck better’n ma doughnuts cain’t hab none of mine.

“But I’d like to know where you got ’em. I’ll bet dat front gate’s open, ’cause der ain’t nobody bringin’ baker’s truck to dis yere house.”

Mandy waddled around the house and closed the gate, and it was many a long day before Rusty got another chance to slip out of the yard again.



CHAPTER VIII

RUSTY'S FAMILY CARES

AFTER Rusty had been three weeks in the Abbott home, he had affairs running pretty well to suit him. He had his two beds, his seat at table with Betty, his meals with Mittens, his rides with his big mistress, and his play with Cook, James, Betty, and her friends, and with Rex, although with Rex most of the play was by Rusty.

With everything going like clockwork,

it was natural for him to be a little put out when Mittens failed one morning to come up from the cellar to be kissed and to eat breakfast with him. He had gone as usual to the door and waited for Cook to open it. At first he was surprised, then provoked, when Mittens disturbed the routine. Cook seemed to know something that he didn't, for she laughed and told him that Mittens had other things of importance to attend to now and he would be obliged to eat his breakfast alone. At first Rusty didn't believe her. He said "Woof" softly twice, and tried to see down in the dark cellar before he gave up hope.

Being very hungry, because Betty had given him only two tiny bits of toast that morning, he could not wait any longer. Slowly he walked to his dish and took a few bites before he looked around to see

if Mittens were not on her way to join him. But she didn't come, and Rusty, very much worried, ate a little more before he caught sight of Cook with a dish of milk in one hand starting down cellar. In the other hand she had a flashlight. Something unusual was going on.

Rusty didn't go down cellar very often, because Cook didn't like to have him. She said that a kitty with four white feet kept perfectly clean down there, but when a black dog, without a white spot on him went into the cellar he came up so 'dirty that he was a disgrace to a nice home.

But this morning Rusty was so worried that he followed Cook without her knowing it. Into the back part of the cellar she went, far beyond where the cellar lights shone. She turned on her flashlight and kept right on going where Rusty had never been before. Cook was talking

to herself in a low voice and seemed to know just where she was going.

When she stopped in a very dark corner Rusty saw by her light that Mittens was in a basket and with her were three little bits of things that Cook called kittens. Mittens seemed perfectly happy and let Rusty kiss her, but she didn't get out of the basket. Rusty hurried around to the other side and tried to get in with Mittens. Cook caught him by his collar and pulled him back.

"Come back here," she said. "Mittens don' want you botherin' her babies. You got no business down here in her bedroom, anyway."

Placing the saucer of milk close by the basket, Cook tucked Rusty under one arm and started for the kitchen. Rusty kept looking back, but he couldn't see in the dark as Mittens could, and he didn't know

whether she was eating her breakfast or not.

For three days Rusty ate his lonely breakfasts. He mooned around the house and found it hard work to play, even with Betty. He began to think that he never should have Mittens' company again, when one morning he found Mittens in her basket in the kitchen with her three babies trying to stagger around on their wobbly little legs. Rusty was so delighted that he rushed at the basket to kiss his friend and was surprised and hurt when she raised her back at him and spit.

"Ah tole you," Cook warned him, "to leave her alone. She don't want no 'tentions from you when she's wid her babies."

Rusty couldn't understand what was wrong, although he spent hours watching Mittens with her children. He saw her wash them one by one, and feed them all

at the same time, and let them crawl over her and play with her tail. It was an interesting study for Rusty, and he was a close student.

Even when Mittens would leave the basket, Rusty would sit there on guard. Once he put his nose down to one, and for the first time in his life he was scratched. Such an unpleasant surprise brought a "yip" from him, and also brought Mittens from somewhere. She jumped into the basket and asked each one what had happened. She must have told them that Rusty would not hurt them, for she climbed out again and went away about her business.

After that, the kittens seemed to accept Rusty as something big and black that their mother was willing to have around, although Cook called him a nuisance. They played and tumbled in and out of

their basket and scampered and slid over the kitchen floor to the great delight of Cook and Rusty, causing the little dog to spend most of his time for the next few weeks "under foot" in the kitchen.

Rusty had been much interested in the way Mittens carried her babies. When one day he found one of the kittens out of the basket and trying to climb in, he carefully took it in his mouth, just as he was sure Mittens did, and in spite of its cries, lifted it and dropped it in the basket. Climbing in, he proceeded to give that kitten the very wettest bath it ever had had. He was just about to start on one of the others when Mittens returned from a trip down cellar. She made one leap into the basket and when Rusty saw how angry she was, he jumped out and, very much offended, went off by himself.

Betty was in school and he couldn't find

his big mistress. Very much disgusted with life, he went up to Betty's room intending to take a nap on his blanket and forget everything in sleep. He jumped up on his blanket and sat there for a minute wondering if there wasn't something he could do instead of go to sleep. One thing he was sure about, and that was that it was the very last time he would help Mittens with her family. In fact, just then he doubted if he would ever eat breakfast with her again. He was quite sure he would never kiss her good-morning.

While he sat there thinking how unkind Mittens had been after all the care he had given her babies, he noticed the big rag doll, the favorite of all Betty's children. It was in a crib that stood by Betty's bed where Betty put her to bed each night before she climbed into her own. He

looked at 'Lizbeth very long and hard, and suddenly he made up his mind that if Mittens could have three tiny babies, he would have one big one.

Sleep was forgotten. He jumped down and sniffed. 'Lizbeth did not spit or slap at him. He stood up and kissed her. She must have liked it, for she didn't move. Very, very carefully he took one arm in his mouth and pulled. 'Lizbeth did not cry, and it couldn't be wrong, because no one called to him to stop. Tugging and pulling, he finally dragged the big doll out from under the bed-clothes to the floor.

Around and around her he walked, smelling of her, kissing her, moving her, first with his nose, and then with a paw. Never a word or a cry did she make. Rusty lay down beside her and pretended to go to sleep. But the floor was hard.

Besides Mittens had a basket, and he wanted one. He remembered that when he went riding mornings with his mistress, she carried one, and they brought home lots of packages in it that men in stores placed there. It was big and round, and was just what he wanted. He trotted off to find it.

It wasn't in his mistress's room, and it wasn't in the big room downstairs, or in the kitchen. He poked his nose in where a door was open just a crack, and there he smelled it. Scratching and poking with his paw and his nose, he got the door to the closet open wide enough to squeeze in. On the floor was just as nice a basket as Mittens had.

It was a tough job getting it out of the closet. The basket was wider than Rusty and the door stuck some, but by hard work he managed finally to get it into the

hall. When he let go to rest and catch his breath, the basket wobbled about, for it was half-round on the bottom. He watched it until it stopped, and then put one foot in, but it tipped and the handle banged him on the back.

He backed away and studied it. Mit-tens' basket did not act like that, he knew, because he had been in it several times. He walked around and tried from the other side, but again the handle banged down on his back. Perhaps the hall was a bad place. Into the big front room he dragged it, but when he tried to step into it, it rolled as it had in the hall. But Rusty was a determined little chap, and this time he kept his foot in and put the other front foot in, too. He found that the basket steadied, but when he got his other two feet in, it was like a teeter for a few seconds, and when he tried to curl

down, the basket moved every which way.

But he didn't intend to let the basket fool him. With the basket acting like a small boat in a rough sea, he twisted and turned until he was satisfied, and then flopped down. He wasn't really comfortable, because the basket tipped so that he was lying partly on his back, but that was better than not having a basket of his own.

Suddenly he started up. He had his basket, but where was his baby? He had been so busy getting the basket that he had forgotten all about 'Lizbeth. Out he jumped and dashed upstairs, the basket rolling around on the rug. This time he wasn't so careful how he picked up the doll, because he knew now that she didn't cry out. Tugging and pulling, stepping on her, straddling her, he walked and

tumbled downstairs and into the big room.

The basket was resting against a chair leg, and that made it much easier to get in. What a struggle he did have! First he tried to lift 'Lizbeth into the basket, but he couldn't get enough of her in to stay there. Climbing in himself, he tried to reach 'Lizbeth to drag her in after him but the basket tipped on its side and dumped him out.

By that time Rusty had become thoroughly in earnest. Growling to show that he was not to allow a basket to defeat him, he grabbed tight hold of 'Lizbeth, and in spite of all the rolling and pitching the basket could do, he finally got in with part of 'Lizbeth. Her head and body were down in the basket, but her long legs hung over the side. That didn't bother either of them, and with a long sigh of

satisfaction that he had at last got a basket and a child to care for, he settled down for the nap he had intended to take after his trouble with Mittens.

That was the way Mrs. Abbott found him when she came home and went into the big front room. She didn't see him at first, because the basket had managed to roll into one corner. When she heard a satisfied sigh from Rusty, she looked in that direction and exclaimed in astonishment. Rusty's tail was wagging and the basket was wobbling as he moved.

"Why, Rusty!" she said. "Who put you there? Where did you get that basket? It's my market-basket. And that's 'Lizabeth! Is Betty home? She can't be yet. Mandy! Mandy!" she called.

Mandy, hurrying as fast as such a fat person could, came from the kitchen.

It was another of those times when Rusty saw those two women he loved—one white and his mistress, the other the black one who fed him—sit down and laugh. It was a day when Rusty had managed to surprise every one.

Not even Betty's welcome call of "Mother, I'm home" made Rusty budge from his basket. He wanted Betty to see him with his child. At first Betty was inclined to be angry because Rusty had taken her very special doll. But she soon got over that, and laughed with her mother and Mandy.

That afternoon Betty went down-town with James in the big car and came back with a nice new doll, smaller than 'Lizbeth but almost like her, which she offered to Rusty for his very own.

Rusty, however, would have nothing to do with the new one. He had adopted

'Lizbeth for his own, and after many attempts to make him change his mind Betty gave up and took the new one for herself. Each night she helped Rusty get settled in his basket with his adopted daughter before she put her own to bed, so she had just that much more to do before she, herself, could climb under the bedclothes, for Rusty, after a few minutes in the basket, would get out, say his prayers, and be lifted to his blanket on the foot of the bed. He didn't consider it necessary to spend the night caring for his child.



CHAPTER IX

RUSTY GOES TO CAMP

USUALLY Rusty had enough business of his own to keep him busy from morning until bedtime, but there were times when he felt that it was necessary to put his own affairs one side and give aid and sympathy to those who needed his help. He was unselfish, and always willing to drop whatever he was doing for his own

amusement to do a favor for one of his beloved family. Especially was he free with genuine sympathy.

And no one knew that better than Betty. Sometimes his little mistress felt that the whole world had gone wrong. It might have been something at school, or a disagreement with Jennie or Pauline, or even because Mother did not wish her to do something she had set her heart on doing. At such times Betty called Rusty and shut herself in her room with him. Into Rusty's big ears Betty poured all her troubles.

In Betty's lap, with her arms tight about him, or stretched on the bed with one of her arms over him, he remained as long as she wanted him. When it seemed the best thing to do, he kissed her hand or her face. Rusty knew exactly the proper time for those caresses.

But it was not only to Betty that he gave his time. The three days that his big mistress remained in bed Rusty hardly left her room. Mittens and Betty both had to eat their meals without him, and what little he ate was brought to him by Sarah and served in his mistress's room. But his big heart knew that he was a comfort to her. He heard the doctor tell her that Rusty did her as much good as the medicines.

It was after Mrs. Abbott's brief illness that another duty was added to the others he had taken upon himself. She wanted Rusty with her all the time he could spare from Betty and her friends. So Rusty felt obliged to give up an hour nearly every morning to ride down-town with his big mistress while she did her marketing. Once in a great while they drove around to the office where his master was, and then

Rusty had a great time for a few minutes hustling around through both rooms to see that everything was as he had left it the first morning that he had met his master.

When he got home, he knew that his work was done for the time being, and that he could attend to his own affairs. The first thing was to pretend that he didn't believe the ride was over. When his mistress got out, Rusty sat staring straight ahead through the windshield.

"All right, James," she would say. "Drive him to the garage and leave him shut in the car!" Looking at Rusty very severely she would ask him if he heard that he was to be shut up so that he could not get out to play with Betty.

Rusty would look at her very politely and when she had finished would settle himself on the seat, look straight ahead

and say “Woof.” Laughing, James would drive to the garage, back the car into place and get out. But Rusty would sit right where he was—until James took off his coat and hung it up. Then he was sure that the ride was ended and he would demand to get out. James would scratch his head, pretend he was thinking whether to risk a scolding from his mistress and let him out, or keep him in there. When he did finally open the door, Rusty would race to Rex, that never went with the car, to tell him about the wonderful ride he had had.

Jumping about, and racing as close to Rex’s nose as he could get, Rusty would shout at him that he had had a wonderful time and had seen lots of dogs that he had barked at. Some of the time he had ridden on the front seat with his paws on the windshield frame, and some of the time he

had stood on the seat with his head hanging out of the door window so that he could see everything. And then, he would say, the rest of the time he had been on the back seat or on his mistress's lap while she talked to him and told him about people and places they passed.

All this Rex was told time after time, but he never let it excite him. Occasionally he would open one eye, but most of the time he didn't even trouble to do that. It was one very hot day after Rusty had been especially talkative and had finally nipped one of Rex's ears to try to make him pay more attention, that Rex lost patience.

He waited until Rusty stopped for an instant in front of him and had looked away. Quickly he raised one of his huge front paws and brought it down on Rusty's back, pinning him to the ground.

How Rusty did howl and cry! James and Cook both rushed to see what had happened, but when they saw, they laughed and went back to their work. Rusty was not being hurt, but he did think it unfair for a great big dog like Rex to play so roughly with a little dog like him.

When Rusty began to whine and whimper, good-natured Rex raised his paw and let his captive go. Rusty bounded away out of reach and told Rex that he ought to be ashamed that a great dog like him couldn't hold a little fellow like Rusty after he had caught him. But Rex just smiled and went to sleep, satisfied that Rusty would not again nip one of his ears.

When Betty's school closed for the long vacation, everybody at the Abbott home became very busy. It seemed to Rusty as if every single room was topsy-turvy. Trunks and bags and grips were every-

where, clothes were spread out on beds, and shoes were all over every room. Betty and her mother and Sarah were continually putting articles in trunks and bags, then taking them out again and searching for something they wanted to put in a certain trunk. Rusty wore himself out helping. It was very discouraging to be told to “drop that shoe” or “bring back that tennis-ball. That’s one of my good ones.”

Betty, who always before had wanted Rusty with her all the time, put him out of her room, and shut the door because she said, “I can’t do anything with that dog poking his nose into everything. He’s taken one of my old camp shoes somewhere, and I can’t find it,” she complained in a loud voice.

“Here it is, dear,” replied her mother.
“He brought it in for me to pack.”

For three days, that's the way things went in the Abbott home. They were preparing to move to their summer camp on a lake away up in Vermont, almost a day's ride from where they had lived since Rusty knew them. When night came, Rusty was so tired that he did not wait for Betty to go to bed, but wearily climbed the stairs, and without being undressed or saying his prayers jumped on the bed and flopped down on his blanket.

When Rusty hurried downstairs to his breakfast on the morning of the fourth day, he found that his master had not gone to his office but was eating breakfast with the others. James was out in the yard with both cars standing in the drive at the side of the house. Catching sight of them from his perch on Betty's chair, Rusty did not wait for even a bite. He leaped down and insisted on being let out. He knew

if the cars were there that some one was going to ride, and Rusty was always the first, except James, to get into a car for a ride.

“Let him out, Betty,” laughed Mr. Abbott. “He will not eat now, and it won’t hurt him as much as it would for him to eat when he is so excited.”

James was busy packing trunks and grips and packages into the station car. Even Cook had come out with a big bag to be packed. It was a wonderfully exciting time, and there was much running back into the house for something that had been forgotten.

Never before had any one been so slow in getting started, which made Rusty very impatient. The biggest surprise was when James boosted big Rex up into the station car, where he stood with trunks and bags and packages all around him. Rex

didn't make a bit of fuss about it. Nothing excited Rex.

At last all was ready, and Mr. Abbott got into Mrs. Abbott's big car with Mrs. Abbott and Betty and several bags and packages. James and the cook and the maid all got into the station car with Rex.

"Here, Betty," said her father. "Take this bundle of excitement and keep him out of my face. How do you suppose a man can drive a car with a crazy dog climbing all over the steering-wheel?"

Betty grabbed Rusty and hugged him up tight while he stuck his head out of the open window. For a long time they drove, leaving the city and going out into the country, where Rusty had never been and where he began to see things that were strange. Once he barked at some animal, and when it said "Moo," Rusty nearly

jumped through the open window, he was so surprised.

After two hours, Mr. Abbott put on the brakes and slowly brought the car to a stop at the roadside.

“Better let that dog out and have a drink in the brook there,” he said to Betty. “It’s pretty hot for humans and dogs both. A drink will do us all good.”

James pulled up behind Mr. Abbott’s car and helped Rex scramble out. The big St. Bernard rushed to the brook and waded right in to cool off. Rusty was straining at the leash, but Mr. Abbott held tight, saying that he could not let him get into the water now, or he would ruin all the clothes and tempers in the Abbott family. “When we get to camp,” he told Rusty, “you may swim all you want.”

When Rex had had time to get his drink

and cool off in the cold brook water, James persuaded him to come out. Getting him into the station car again without getting Mr. Abbott and James wet was another matter. With lots of grunting and laughter they at last managed to get him boosted in again, and were on their way once more.

With the car moving along over a dusty road through thick woods, Rusty became much excited. He tried hard to tell Betty that he ought to be allowed to get out and scurry around and smell all the strange smells that came faintly to his sensitive nose even as they drove swiftly along. He was still begging to get out when Mr. Abbott turned the car into a farmyard and stopped at a big gate.

Mr. Brown, the owner of the farm, came from the barn and let them through, while Rusty barked an excited comment

on everything. Mr. Brown came to the car to talk with his friend, Mr. Abbott, and to greet Mrs. Abbott and Betty. He pulled Rusty's ears and told him he would surely have a grand time at the lake all summer, which made Rusty all the more anxious to get there.

In a short time they turned a corner in the woods, and there was the lake, with the first of five cottages that were grouped at one end. The Abbotts were the last to arrive, and when all the others heard the cars coming, they rushed out to shout greetings to Betty and her parents, and to exclaim over Rusty. The other children climbed up on the station car to hug Rex in spite of warnings that he was wet and dirty. They didn't care, they said, so long as Rex had come again. And besides they were dirty, anyway. No fun being in camp if you had to keep clean.

They shouted at Cook to beg for cookies and doughnuts, as if they had no one to cook for them in their own camps. It was plain to Rusty that the folks in this new place were just as nice as those he had met in the other home of his master and mistress.

Mr. Abbott kept blowing his horn for the children to get away from the car so that he could drive on to his own cottage, which was at the far end of the row. He had to drive so carefully that it seemed a long time. When he finally stopped the car at the rear door, he said to Betty:

“Now let that crazy black thing out of this car. He won’t go far, and he will choke himself if you try to hold him any longer.”

Betty unsnapped the catch on the leash, and Rusty tumbled out, to yelp and jump and run without getting anywhere except

under the feet of every person in the party every minute.

“ I’ll bet I’ve fallen over that pup forty times,” grumbled Mr. Abbott as he came out of the cottage half an hour later for another load of grips and bundles. “ I’ve stepped on him, kicked him, and fallen over him, and before I can take another step, he’s right between my legs again.”

“ I don’t see how that can be,” said James, “ because he’s been under my feet or between my legs ever since I got out of the car.”

“ Where is he now? ” asked Betty. “ I’ll take him over to see Alice and Joyce.”

“ He was digging a shaft or a mine or something near the front steps,” her father answered. “ Let him dig it deep enough so he will fall into it and stay there until we can get this stuff into the cottage. If

you don't, some one will break a leg over him."

"He must be trying to get Chippy," cried Betty as she ran around the cottage calling for her pet. But he wasn't there. She ran down to the wharf, but only Rex was there, lying in the cool mud. Thoroughly frightened, Betty ran back towards the cottage, calling for Rusty at the top of her voice.

Her father came on tiptoe out of the front door, fingers on lips.

"Don't call him," he whispered. "He's upstairs, tucked out and asleep on your bed. Leave him alone until we can get settled."

And so it was that Rusty missed several hours of a very busy time that afternoon and evening while the summer home was being settled.



CHAPTER X

RUSTY LEARNS TWO LESSONS

IT was not until Rusty awakened after the first night in camp and had gone down to breakfast that he remembered something. Mittens and her family had been left behind! He didn't know that Jennie and Pauline had taken them to their home to care for them, so he felt very sorry for them. After a few bites of Betty's

breakfast he trotted out to the kitchen and looked around for the door that led to the cellar. But there was no such door!

Cook knew what he was looking for, and explained that he would not eat breakfast with Mittens all summer. Not having had much to eat the day before and having worked very hard, Rusty was so hungry that he ate a very big breakfast without once lifting his head to look for Mittens. He hurried his meal, because he could hear Betty calling to Alice and Joyce about going out in the boat, and Rusty did not intend to be left behind.

While he didn't yet know Alice and Joyce as well as he knew Jennie and Pauline, they were Betty's friends and nice to play with. Having gobbled his meal, he asked Cook please to open the door, and dashed around the cottage to-

wards the wharf where he heard the voices of his playmates.

There had been so much to do after they arrived the afternoon before that he had not had time to run down a stray scent or two that had come to his nose. He had spent a few minutes digging for Chippy near the front steps, but gave that up until he had more time to give to what promised to be a long job. Now he was on his way for a boat-ride. He was not sure that he should like it, but he felt that he ought to try it once.

Instead of keeping his mind on one thing—the boat-ride—he had his nose close to the ground as he ran towards the wharf. He remembered that somewhere along there yesterday he had caught a new scent. Suddenly he got it again. Some animal had been there! He circled about quickly, trying to find which way

it had gone, but even then his ears were wide open to hear what Betty and her friends were doing.

Finding that the trail led off towards the brush at the end of Mr. Abbott's lot, Rusty stopped once to be sure that the girls were where he could see and hear them. He didn't intend that they should go off and leave him. He saw Alice run towards her own cottage after something they had forgotten, which would give him time for a short trip. With so many new things to see and do, Rusty found that camping was great fun. Giving one last look towards the wharf, he was off once more with his nose down. Even though he went farther than he had intended, he could still hear the girls calling, which gave him confidence that they would wait for him. A little farther along, he caught sight of the animal.

“Cat,” he barked after one quick look. With another delighted yelp he leaped forward to the chase. But Rusty had been very much mistaken. In another minute he was yelping from surprise and the stinging pain in his eyes. Blinded, he turned to run, but because he could not see, he bumped against a tree which brought a louder yelp than before. Stopping, he pawed at his eyes in an effort to clear them. He had become turned around and, so strong was the strange smell all about him, he couldn't tell which way he had come.

Away off in the distance he could hear Betty calling: “Hi, Rusty. Hi, Rusty. Where are you? What's the matter?”

He answered with his loudest barks as he tried to go in the direction from which Betty's voice came to him. The stinging pain in his eyes was slowly passing, which

let him see more clearly, but he couldn't smell his own tracks because of the much stronger other scent. He could hear Betty, Alice, and Joyce crashing through the brush as they called his name. He barked again to tell them he was coming as fast as he could.

But the girls stopped suddenly. "It's a skunk! Rusty's been after a skunk! Come away quick," he heard Betty cry.

Rusty's keen ears told him that the girls were running away from him instead of towards him. Now that his eyes had cleared some, he ran faster, but he did not catch his playmates, who, when he reached the Abbott cottage, had gone inside and shut the door tight.

Rusty asked nicely to be allowed inside that Betty might comfort him. But no one would open the door. He tried the kitchen door, only to have Cook shout

through the window to him to go somewhere and bury himself. Remembering the shed where the cars had been placed made him think of James. He hurried to him for sympathy. When others needed sympathy, Rusty was always free with it, but in his own need of it his friends turned away. Before James saw him, Rusty had jumped on him as he began to tell him his troubles.

James, wearing overalls, had been dusting the car Mr. Abbott had driven to camp when Rusty appeared.

"Whew," exclaimed James, holding his nose with one hand. "Get away from me! You smell worse than the fellow that sprayed you. Get away, I say. Here, don't go near Rex. And come away from that car! You'll have everything all smelled up."

Rusty backed away, whining because he

did not understand such treatment. Never before had every one acted like this. He didn't know what was the best thing for him to do.

James looked at Rusty as he scratched his head with the hand that was not holding his nose. After some thought, he pawed around in the station car, talking to himself as he did so. He slipped something into a pocket and something else into another before he called Rusty to him.

Rusty hesitated. Something was going to happen he was sure, and he doubted if he would like it. But James, being a good friend, he walked to him. Instead of picking him up James caught him by the collar, tied a string to it and marched towards the lake.

By that time Rusty knew he was in for a bath. He hung back. James, however,

marched right along so that Rusty found it useless to dig his claws in and hang back. Betty and her friends, watching from the cottage windows, hurt Rusty with their laughter as they told James how sorry they were for him. Not one of them was sorry for Rusty when he needed their sympathy very much. It was a time "when a fellow needs a friend."

Out on the wharf James marched, dragging Rusty behind him down into one of the boats. The water being very shallow at one end James lifted Rusty overboard and began at once to lather him with a strong-smelling soap that Rusty despised. From one of his pockets he drew a scrubbing-brush. He lathered and scrubbed as Rusty never had been lathered and scrubbed before in all the times James or Betty had given him baths. Rusty

whined and cried and struggled, but the more he protested, the harder James scrubbed.

“Go chasing a skunk, will you?” he said between clenched teeth. “Get my overalls all smelled up, will you? Don’t you know anything at all, you foolish dog, you? Any intelligent dog would know a skunk from a cat. Come here to me, you scallawag, you, while I scrub you some more. I’ll get that smell off of you if I have to scrub the hair and hide right off. You hear me!”

Betty, Alice, and Joyce came down to the wharf calling to James as they came to be sure and keep tight hold on Rusty. They were laughing and calling him a poor foolish dog, which made him very unhappy. A bath like the one he was getting was nothing to laugh about.

“I’ll take him with me, Miss Betty,”

said James, "dry him off, and keep him wrapped up in an old blanket I have in the station car. Then I'll comb him and brush him. When he's good and dry after he runs a while—unless he chases Jimmy Skunk again—he'll be all right to go into the house. I'd let him dry off in the sun, but the first thing he would do would be to roll in the dirt."

That shows how much James thought of Rusty. Working over a dog that had been foolish enough to chase a skunk is not a pleasant job. While James grumbled and scolded a good deal, he really was not cross, but actually sorry for the little dog. Finishing his scrubbing, he put Rusty on the wharf to let him shake himself as dry as a dog can, while James kept firm hold of the rope.

Rusty whined and begged to go with the girls in the other boat which they had

pushed away from the wharf to be out of range of Rusty when he shook himself. Alice called to James that they were willing to take Rusty with them, but James replied that to make him stay in the shed a while would be punishment which might make him remember not to chase a skunk again. He marched right back to the shed with Rusty hanging back, looking after the girls who had gone out on the lake for their first row without taking him with them.

The first pleasant thing that had happened to Rusty in the whole morning was finding that Cook had brought his basket with 'Lizbeth in it for him to lie in. James put the basket near the station car, tied Rusty's rope to one of the wheels, spread an old robe in the basket, and motioned Rusty to get in. Rusty scratched at the robe until he had uncovered one of 'Liz-

beth's arms. He seized that and dragged her out of the basket. James laughed, fixed the robe again, tucked 'Lizbeth in, and after he had rubbed Rusty as dry as possible with a cloth Cook had brought him, he let him get into the basket and covered both Rusty and 'Lizbeth over with the robe.

Rusty peeked and saw James take off his overalls and go out back of the garage where he hung them on a tree. When he came back and saw Rusty watching him, he told him that one dog he knew was mighty lucky that a friend of his had two pairs of overalls. If this friend had not had the two pairs, he said, a certain spaniel he knew, that had been such a fool as to chase a skunk, would have been tied to a tree out in the woods and left there until he did not smell bad. Lots of things James told him Rusty did not believe, and

that was one of them, so he just tucked his head down on 'Lizabeth and pretended to go to sleep.

James, having finished dusting off the car, brushed his clothes before starting to go to Mr. Brown's farm on an errand for Mrs. Abbott. James, being young, liked to walk through the woods, even when he could have driven if he had wished to do so. Rusty begged to go, and James decided that a run in the fresh air would help to take away what little was left of the skunk smell.

Rusty, very subdued, trotted close to James' heels most of the way, stopping only once to bark at a grey squirrel that whisked around a tree-trunk and scolded about dogs coming into his country. Rusty dared him to come down on the ground. They were arguing about it when James whistled and told Rusty to

let the little animals alone; that they had more right there than he had.

They had almost reached the barnyard when a black-and-white pig, only a few weeks old, that had escaped from the pen where the mother and her nine other babies were staying, ran across the path in front of James and Rusty, squealing loudly at sight of them.

Rusty started with a delighted yelp. There was an animal that would run, and how it did squeal and dodge this way and that! Rusty pretended not to hear James call him to come back, but after he had run a few more steps, he remembered what had happened that morning. He decided that it would be better to mind, for he did not know what this kind of an animal might do.

He waited for James to come up, then started ahead again when he saw big Shep

coming around the corner of the barn on the run. Trouble anywhere on the farm always found Shep hurrying to get to the scene to straighten out matters. He had many farm duties. He drove the cows to pasture in the morning, and he rounded them up in the late afternoon and drove them back to the barn to be milked. He followed his master wherever his work took him, watched the horses for him, guarded the wagon when in town, and kept other dogs from getting among the sheep.

In another minute Mr. Brown appeared. He, too, was coming to see what was wrong with his pigs, for the escaped piggy had made so much noise that all his brothers and sisters and their mother were squealing and grunting.

James told Mr. Brown what had happened. "That's all right," the farmer re-

plied. "Shep will round him up so I can catch him."

James picked up Rusty. "Now, you young rascal, you," he said, pulling one of Rusty's ears, "you keep quiet and watch what an intelligent, sensible, trained dog can do. Maybe you'll learn something. You could do this just as well as Shep if you would keep your mouth shut and tend to business. Of course," he added, "you are very young and things are strange out in the country here, but before you go home you will learn quite a lot."

While James was talking, Rusty was whining and wriggling in his arms. But he was watching Shep, that had trotted around and headed off the little pig and started him back towards the pen. Shep didn't say anything, but it was a crazy-looking trail they made. The pig dodged

this way and that, trying to go any way but in the direction of the pen. But Shep was even better at dodging than the pig, and every minute found them getting nearer and nearer to the pen, where the pig's mother and brothers and sisters were squealing.

Mr. Brown stood close to the gate ready to open it when Shep had driven the pig near enough. Pretty soon Shep got the little pig running around the outside of the pen, and when he drove him around to the side on which the gate was, Mr. Brown opened it and the little fellow ran in, where he received a noisy welcome from the others.

Shep trotted up to his master, who patted his head, and told him that he didn't know how he would ever get the farm work done without his help. Rusty barked his excited approval, because

Rusty believed in giving praise where praise was due. James put Rusty down, and he rushed over to Shep for a little talk.

“Oh, that’s nothing,” Shep told the little fellow in dog language. “You just want to keep after a cow or a pig or a sheep; not hurry them, you know, but just keep them moving the way you want them to go. They don’t know as much as we dogs do, and they think it is smart to bother their master by hiding or trying to dodge away. This pig business doesn’t happen very often, and I’m much obliged to you for letting me know about it, because if the little fellow had wandered off into the woods I’d have had a long job getting him back, and I have so much other work to do that I could not really spare the time.”

Shep said good-bye and gave Rusty an

invitation to come and see him some afternoon when he was not so busy as he was in the morning, and Rusty trotted back to James very proud of the fact that Shep had given him credit. He tried to tell James all about it, but James said that he wasn't entitled to any of the credit, because he had not been trying to do any good but had just been out for fun. "But," said James, "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if you had learned two things this morning: to leave skunks alone, and not to make so much noise whenever you are really working."



CHAPTER XI

RUSTY'S BUSY DAY

THE excitement of the morning made Rusty quite tired by the time he returned to camp from Mr. Brown's farm. His playmates were still out on the lake in the light row-boat, Mrs. Abbott and Cook were busy in the cottage, Rex was stretched out on the shore of the lake where it was damp and cool, and James

was fussing with one of the cars, because Mr. Abbott had said that he must go back to his office for a few days and would start immediately after lunch. There being nothing to do, Rusty flopped down on the piazza for a nap.

He had scarcely shut his eyes when Mr. Abbott came out of the cottage in a bathing-suit and announced that he and Rusty were going for a swim before lunch. Rusty was ready in an instant, although he never had been swimming. But anything his master did, Rusty was ready and willing to try. Down to the wharf and into one of the boats Mr. Abbott and Rusty went. He was to have his boat-ride even if the girls had not waited for him. He got up in the bow, and as the boat moved through the water under the powerful strokes of Mr. Abbott at the oars, Rusty barked from sheer delight

at the motion and the little waves the boat made as it went through the water.

Having reached deep water Mr. Abbott stopped rowing, pulled in the oars and called his pet to him. Picking him up he held Rusty over the side of the boat where Rusty found to his surprise that he was making his legs paddle as if he were already in the water.

"That's the way to swim, Rusty, old boy," laughed Mr. Abbott. "Instinct tells you how to make your legs go. At any rate, you have the idea all right, so I'll just drop you in and follow right after you."

With that he put Rusty in the water. Away he swam, snapping at the bubbles he saw ahead of him. He was much surprised a moment later at a big splash that made big waves. Shaking the water out of his eyes he looked at the boat. Fright-

ened because he could not see his master, he barked, which seemed to bring his master's head out of the water immediately in front of him. Mr. Abbott was blowing and shaking the water from his head and face just as Rusty had done. This was surely something new.

Mr. Abbott turned to swim around the boat while Rusty paddled after him as fast as he could. His master called to him to hurry, but Rusty was working his legs as fast as he possibly could, while he barked continuously at the fun he was having.

When Mr. Abbott had swam as long as he cared to, he drew himself into the boat while Rusty paddled around wondering if he was to be left out there in the water all alone. But a minute later he was lifted into the boat, where he vigorously shook himself. Back at the wharf, Rusty gave

himself another vigorous shake before scampering to the cottage.

His mistress met him on the piazza to tell him that he must lie on his blanket in front of the fireplace where a cozy fire was burning, until he was thoroughly dry. Rusty, of course, wasn't expected to understand that long speech, so his mistress snapped his leash on his collar and led him to his blanket in front of the fire. His tail told his delight, for if there was anything Rusty loved it was to snooze in front of a fire, even on a warm day. Tying his leash to one leg of the heavy table, Mrs. Abbott told him again to lie there to get dry, and in the afternoon he could go with the girls after daisies.

Picking daisies was something Rusty knew nothing about, but he got as close to the fire as he could and stand the heat. Soon he was asleep, dreaming of skunks

and pigs, of swimming and picking daisies. When Alice and Joyce came running in after Betty at the end of their rest hour, which all the girls took after lunch, Rusty was dry and ready for his share of the adventure, whatever it might be.

The girls trooped off through the bar-way at the end of Mr. Abbott's land, Rusty running ahead smelling out the way. Suddenly he stopped and growled.

"This must be where he met the skunk," exclaimed Betty. "We'd better go off this way, because if that skunk has his home around here we might run into him."

Turning to one side the girls hurried along, which delighted Rusty, as he remembered well the trouble he had run into that morning. In a short time they came out into a big open field. Finding a path through it that they remembered from the year before, they walked along

in Indian file, one behind the other, with Rusty some of the time in the path when he wasn't chasing off into the tall grass where he was lost to view. His playmates could tell where he was by the waving of the tall grass as he dashed here and there in his excited running about on the scents of field-mice, moles, and other small life of the field.

The girls knew that daisies grew by thousands on the far side of an old stone wall that once had been the dividing-line between two farms. They headed for a break in the wall, walking through it into a field that was almost white with the pretty summer flowers. The farmer would have been glad to have had them all picked, but the girls wandered here and there, choosing only the very largest and best for their bouquets.

“ Oh, there's a black-eyed-Susan,” cried

Alice, pointing with her bouquet. "Let's try to find a bouquet of them, too. I didn't remember that they blossomed so early."

"I guess that there are only a few of them, perhaps only that one," said Betty. "You go along over there, and if you find enough, let Joyce and me know and we'll come over. You saw it first and you ought to have it," she added generously. Alice hurried along through the tall grass, which was almost ready to be cut for hay.

Betty and Joyce, each already with a big bouquet, were picking even more slowly now, selecting only very special flowers. As they picked, they talked about plans for the next day, deciding that after a swim in the morning they would take their lunches across the lake to the top of Sugar Hill for a picnic.

"I wish our mothers would go," said Betty, "but they seem to think it is nicer

to sit on the piazza sewing or doing embroidery, or just reading. Mother likes picnics, though, so perhaps I can coax her to go."

"If you can," replied Joyce, "I think Mother would go, too. They could sit and talk or do embroidery while we did all the work. That is, all but washing the dishes and things. We would pack those to bring back for your Mandy and our Minnie to do. I just hope it doesn't rain for ——"

What Joyce was about to say was interrupted by a cry from Alice, a sharp, frightened cry of pain. Both girls and Rusty listened a moment before Rusty's keen sense of hearing caught the sounds of sobs and moans. With one short, sharp bark to say that he was coming, he dashed off through the grass, every few jumps leaping high in the air to try to see over the waving grass.

Once he stopped and listened intently. He heard again the sobs and moans of pain near him. Once more he barked sharply to tell Alice that he was coming.

Betty and Joyce had called several times to know what was the matter. Getting no answer that they could hear they were hurrying in the direction Alice had taken, calling to her as they tried to run through the grass.

Rusty found his playmate seated on the ground, crying with the pain of a severely sprained ankle. She had stepped in a hole, and already the injured member was swelling.

Rusty sensed at once that something was very wrong, just as he did when Betty took him to her room to cry and tell him what was bothering her. He tenderly kissed the hand Alice was holding on her

ankle, and kissed some of the salty tears away from her face.

“ I knew you'd come, Rusty,” she said, choking back the sobs. “ Now if you were only big enough for me to ride on, I could get home, for I can't walk. I'm afraid I have broken my ankle. Anyway, I've sprained it very badly. See how it is swollen already, and there isn't a drop of cold water to put on it.”

Rusty wanted help. He barked several little sharp barks to guide Betty and Joyce to where he had found Alice. In a few minutes they came, breathless with hurrying.

“ Oh, Alice,” cried her sister, “ what has happened?” She dropped on her knees and clasped Alice in her arms, very much frightened, for Alice did not cry often.

Practical Betty laid down her huge

bouquet of daisies and tenderly felt of the swollen ankle.

“We can’t carry you, dear,” she said, “so one of us must go for James. He can get the car through the bars as far as the stone wall, and the three of us can get you to the car.”

“I don’t want to be left alone,” said Alice. “It’s getting late and I’m afraid because I’m so helpless.”

“Joyce will stay with you, and I’ll hurry right home,” replied Betty. “I will be only a few minutes, and James will be less than that getting back here.”

“I wish we could send Rusty,” said Joyce. “I don’t want to stay here alone with Alice.”

“All right. I’ll stay then,” replied Betty, “and you can go. I’m not afraid.”

“But Rusty could go so much faster,” objected Joyce, “if he only knew enough

to go back and if we had a note we could pin to his collar."

Rusty, hearing his name, barked and whined softly to tell them that he was ready to do anything to help.

"We haven't any paper, or a pencil to write a note if we had the paper," said Betty thoughtfully. "Let me see. I have it! We'll take off your stocking and tie it to Rusty's collar. That will show them at home that he didn't just grab the stocking and run away with it for fun, and your stocking, Alice, would show them that something was wrong with you. Of course, he may not go home but I think I can make him understand, because James has been teaching him to go from the garage to Cook with something tied to his collar. Rusty thinks that is great fun, because Cook gives him a bite of a cracker or a cookie as a reward."

While Betty was explaining her plan, Joyce was untying Alice's shoe and carefully taking it off. Alice herself loosened her stocking and held her injured leg up while her sister pulled the stocking off as carefully as she could. They saw that the injured ankle had begun to show black-and-blue, which told them that it was a very severe sprain. Just then Joyce remembered a little brook at the farther side of the field. Taking Betty's handkerchief and her own, she hurried there to wet them in the cold water and apply them to the ankle, which eased the pain a little and helped to prevent it from swelling more.

While Joyce was doing that, Betty was tying with many knots the stocking to Rusty's collar, being careful to tie up the ends so that he would not step on them or catch them on brush as he ran. The little dog sat very still, but he trembled with

excitement in his eagerness to be doing something.

“Now, Rusty, dear,” said Betty when she had tied the stocking to her satisfaction, “run home to James—James, do you understand? When he sees you he will know something has happened. Mother knows where we are because she came over here with us last year. Now go! And hurry, Rusty. Hurry!”

Betty clapped her hands and pointed towards the lake and the cottages, although they were too far away to see them.

Rusty jumped around and barked, thinking at first that Betty was going to throw something for him to chase.

“Go home, Rusty! Go home to James,” she commanded, her voice trembling a little in her fear that her pet would not understand what they wanted him to do.

But she needn't have feared. Sure that Betty was not about to throw something for him to bring to her, he caught her meaning. With one yelp to show that he understood, he bounded away through the long grass.

"I believe that he's really going to do it," said Alice, watching the grass move wildly along Rusty's trail as she tried hard to blink the tears out of her eyes. She almost forgot her pain.

"I'm sure he is," said Betty, dancing up and down in her excitement. "If he doesn't, when it gets late they will come looking for us, and we will all stay together."

James was working with a rake in front of the Abbott cottage. Mrs. Abbott and Mrs. Phillips, mother of Alice and Joyce, were on the piazza talking and sewing when they heard Rusty's excited barking

as he came running to them. He ran straight to James and leaped up at him.

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Phillips, "he has something tied to his collar!"

James was already bending over him and untying the stocking. "It's a stocking," he said, holding it up with one hand while he scratched his head with the other, as he always did when he was puzzled.

The two ladies hurrying down from the piazza saw that the stocking was one of Alice's. Rusty ran from one to the other of them and then dashed around the cottage, barking anxiously. James watched him.

"He's going to the garage," he said. "I'll bet one of the girls has hurt her leg. Yes, sir. That's it. Good dog, Rusty! You're one smart pup!" He ran towards the garage.

Mrs. Abbott and Mrs. Phillips fol-

lowed, for they were frightened and wished to hasten to their children. James hastily backed the station car out of the shed and called to Rusty to get in with him. But Rusty ran towards the bars in the fence that would let them drive in to the big meadow.

“He’ll show us,” said James. “That’s what he’s telling us—‘Follow me,’ he says. ‘All right, Rusty, old chap, we’re coming,’” he called as he got out to help the two ladies into the car.

Cook had hurried out to learn what had happened, and now she came back again with a thermos bottle of cold water and some pieces of old cloth.

“Cain’t tell, ma’am, wha’ you may want,” she said, handing them to her mistress.

In just a few minutes more James had reached the stone wall and stopped the

car. But Rusty had leaped the wall and plunged on through the grass, barking joyously at every leap. James honked the horn loudly.

"Here we are," Betty and Joyce called, Betty waving the big hat she had been wearing. "We're 'way over here, and Alice has sprained her ankle."

"All right," called James. "We'll be right there."

He helped the two mothers out and over the wall and they all hurried to the girls, to find Rusty there clasped tight in Betty's arms and trying to kiss away her tears.

"I'm only crying because I'm so glad that Rusty is such a good little dog," she explained, looking up at her mother as she blinked the tears away.

Mrs. Phillips carefully wrapped Alice's injured ankle in the cloths Cook had so thoughtfully given them, after she had

wet them with the cold water from the thermos bottle. After Alice had had a drink, for she was a bit faint with the pain, James picked her up in his strong arms and carried her to the car, while the girls told just what had happened.

The field was pretty rough for an automobile ride, so James drove back to the cottage very slowly in order not to hurt Alice's ankle. But Alice did not seem to mind the few rough spots, for she was hugging Rusty tight and telling him that he was the best dog that ever lived.

Rusty rode with James to Mr. Brown's farm, where James telephoned for a doctor. Rusty almost blushed while he heard James tell Mr. Brown what a smart family he worked for, because Betty thought of tying the stocking to Rusty's collar, and Rusty brought the message to him, as plain as if it had been written out.



CHAPTER XII

RUSTY PLAYS NURSE

WHEN the doctor came, Betty and Rusty were at Mrs. Phillips' cottage to learn how badly Alice had been injured. Of course the picnic had been given up; in fact, neither Betty nor Joyce had once thought of it since Alice had first cried out with pain. Dr. Parker, a big, jolly physician, who lived in a little town a few

miles distant from the camp, knew everybody and everything for miles around.

James had told him over the telephone what had happened and what they thought was the trouble, so the doctor was not surprised to see Alice lying on the big comfortable window-seat with cold cloths wrapped around her ankle. But he was surprised to see Rusty curled up tight to her while she played with one of his floppy silky ears.

“ I didn’t know you had a dog, Alice,” he said with surprise. “ If I had known that you had one to nurse you, I shouldn’t have hurried over here first. I would have gone to see old Miss French who says her asthma is worse and that she needs some of my medicine right away.”

Of course Rusty’s tail was wagging, slapping softly on the cushion of the window-seat as he watched to see whether this

strange man was to make him go away. The doctor bent over Alice and Rusty.

“Are you going to let me touch her?” he asked Rusty. “I’m not going to hurt her, you know, but I’ve got to get those cloths off and see just what has happened to that ankle.”

Alice told him who Rusty was and all about how he had got word to James and her mother of the accident. Dr. Parker said that any dog smart enough to do that without being taught was sensible enough to let a doctor look at a damaged ankle without making a fuss. He patted Rusty and sat down in a chair that Mrs. Phillips had drawn up for him while he had been talking.

“It’s awful sore,” said Alice, raising her head to see as well as she could what it looked like when the doctor got it uncovered. Betty and Joyce and her mother

were curious, too, for the girls had seen it when it first began to swell. Rusty lifted his head and gave Alice a quick kiss which made Dr. Parker chuckle.

“That’s one great dog,” he said approvingly. “He knows how to sympathize, and we all need a little of that when we are sick or hurt. He’ll be great company for you for the next few days—if he will stay with you,” he added as he lifted the last cloth carefully.

“He’ll stay,” said Betty. “As soon as he got back from the farm with James he came here instead of to our cottage, and he barked until Mrs. Phillips had to let him in. He wouldn’t even come home for his dinner, so I brought it over here. The minute he had eaten it, he got right up there with Alice and has been there ever since.”

“I wish I had a dog like him to drive

around with me," said Dr. Parker wistfully. "He would be great company. Perhaps some day I'll find one that I want, but if I do I suppose he will want to stay with the first sick person I call on, and that wouldn't make him much company for me, would it, Alice?"

"Ouch," exclaimed Alice. "That hurt!"

"So that's the sore spot, is it?" said the doctor who, after looking very carefully at the injured ankle, had touched one spot. "Well, Alice, I don't think you are going to be laid up long. You haven't broken anything. You have strained one of the cords, but keeping cold water on it has kept down the swelling so I can see just what damage you did to it. I'll do it up tight, and you'll have to keep off of it for ten days or so. I brought along a pair of crutches that I had at the office. I think

they will fit you. Out here in the country, we doctors have to keep such things around, because we have no drug stores or supply houses where we can get them quickly. Mother or Joyce or Betty can help you until you learn how to handle them, and to-morrow after you have had a good night's sleep you can get out on the piazza. Be careful not to touch that foot to the ground or the floor until I tell you you may. And be sure not to fall!"

Alice promised. Her mother said that she would see that Alice was careful, and Betty and Joyce both promised to be around whenever Alice needed help. When he had finished bandaging the ankle and had left a little medicine for Mrs. Phillips to give Alice when it was bedtime so that she would be sure to sleep, he said that he must hurry along because he had two long drives to make to see patients

before he could start for home. While he was promising to come back in a week, he was looking at Rusty.

“How would you like to come for a ride with me?” he asked as he went to the door and opened it.

Rusty got up on his feet, turned around very slowly and snuggled down again, his back to the doctor. Everybody laughed, for it was just as if Rusty had said, “What a very foolish question to ask me, when you can see that I am needed right here.”

Later that afternoon, Rusty was introduced to something new to eat—pop-corn. Mrs. Phillips and Joyce and Betty got a long-handled corn-popper, built a small fire in the fireplace, and popped corn. It was exciting business for Rusty. When the kernels began to pop, he jumped from the window-seat, ran close to the fire and

barked. With the first excitement over, he remembered that he had left Alice all alone and jumped up on the window-seat where he remained for the rest of the afternoon, sharing with Alice the delicious bits of food that came from the corn-popper.

Rusty was in doubt what to do when Betty was ready to go home in the evening. She had remained for supper with Mrs. Phillips and her playmates. They had made a picnic meal of it from a card-table placed near the window-seat. But when bedtime came, James appeared to carry Alice upstairs, while Rusty puzzled whether he ought to remain with his injured friend or go home with his little mistress. Finally he trotted home with Betty, because Alice told him that she did not need his company at night. He dreamed of a noise that was white and good to eat.

The next day Mr. Abbott came to camp to spend a week. With him, he brought many packages which he was very careful to put where Rusty could not even smell of them. He said what was in them had cost a lot of money, and he wouldn't have a dog that he had heard had chased a skunk spoil everybody's fun on the Fourth of July.

The very next day, Mr. Abbott and James were busy much of the time building a small raft on which they fastened sticks that stood up like masts. They nailed two boards together so they looked like a trough for water to run in. They fastened this to the raft so that it pointed towards the sky. It was all very strange to Rusty, especially as neither Mr. Abbott nor James wanted him around. They kept telling him to run along and find Betty or Alice. He had been over with

Alice several times, and went back there again to lie at her feet for a long nap. Alice had managed her crutches well enough to get downstairs and out on the piazza. Lying there, Rusty could hear all, and yet catch forty winks.

Late in the afternoon, Mr. Abbott and Rusty had a swim, in which they were joined by Rex, who swam out from the shore to join them. The big fellow wanted to get into the boat when they started back but only Rusty rode. Rex, his master said, was too heavy. As he rowed slowly back to the wharf, Rex followed, while Rusty, perched in the bow, listened while his master promised that the next day he would see and hear things entirely new. And Rusty did.

Very early the next morning, before Rusty could smell anything cooking which would have told him that Cook was pre-

paring breakfast, Betty crawled very quietly out of her bed. Dressing in a great hurry, she slipped quietly downstairs and ran outdoors. Rusty listened, but when he was sure that she had not gone to the breakfast table he sighed at having been disturbed and went back to sleep. A few minutes later he was startled by the strangest snapping noise he had ever heard. Then he heard Betty squeal and Joyce shout back from her cottage. He was certain that he was needed to help.

With a sharp little yelp to tell them he was coming, he bounded from his blanket on Betty's bed and dashed downstairs to the front door where, with the noises continuing outside, he barked "until he started the roof off from the house," Mr. Abbott said when he hurried down to open the door. Before he opened it, he warned Rusty not to let any sparks from fire-

crackers burn him, and called to Betty to be careful that Rusty did not get hurt.

He found Betty standing by a big flat rock in the front yard, with smoke and fire and cracking noises coming from it. The noise was louder than the pop-corn had made, and Rusty didn't like the smell. He braced himself to be ready to turn and run as he watched the flying bits of fire-crackers as they exploded. He wasn't really afraid, but he knew better than to go any nearer.

Betty continued to light bunch after bunch of tiny firecrackers without paying the slightest attention to him. The noise made his head ache, so he trotted around to the kitchen door to ask Cook to let him in. Cook, who had just come downstairs, was surprised to see him up so early. She told him to go and play, because breakfast was not ready at so early an hour.

He went to the Phillips' cottage to find Alice, but the only one around was Joyce who, like Betty, was exploding firecrackers all alone, because Alice was finding it hard work to dress quickly and get downstairs on her crutches. The noise bothered him, so he paid no attention to Joyce when she told him that Alice would be down in a minute, and decided to go alone to the farm and ask Shep if he liked so much noise.

Off along the familiar path he trotted, every step taking him farther away from the noise of the firecrackers. Not a single squirrel scolded him, even though he stopped at two different trees where he knew they had homes. Once he left the path to scout among the ferns and brush. He stopped short when, with a great roar and whirr, something brown went up from the ground to whirl off into the air among

the trees. That was the first time Rusty had seen or heard a partridge. It made him think that everywhere he went that day there was noise.

He turned back to the path where all was quiet, and hurried to the big barn on the farm. But the barn was empty. Not even a cow was there. He could smell Shep's tracks, but wherever they led him there was no sign of Shep. He went to the fence and the big high gate that separated the barnyard from the house. It was too high for him to jump. He couldn't crawl under it, but he ran the entire length of the fence before he gave that idea up.

Starting home, he remembered the pigpen and the little pig that had escaped. He ran over there. Sure enough, mother pig and all her babies were inside the pen, but he didn't consider that as any reason

why he should not bark at them. Shep would come to see what was the matter and he could have his visit with him.

Going close to the pen he barked furiously. The little pigs squealed in fright as they ran around in the pen. Their mother grunted and stirred uneasily, but when she saw no real danger she was too lazy to get up. After a minute Rusty stopped barking to look towards the gate. Perhaps Shep hadn't heard him! Again he started his savage barking, and as he stopped for breath he saw Shep sail through the air over the gate and race towards the pen.

Rusty ran to meet him and Shep stopped to ask what was the matter.

"Not a thing," said Rusty. "I wanted to see you for a little visit and as I couldn't find you or get over or under the gate I came down here to bark just as I did that

morning when the little pig got out. Now you have come I want to ask you if ——”

“I suppose you think that was very smart,” Shep interrupted, turning away from his little friend. “But I tell you it wasn’t. I was helping round up some sheep when we heard you calling as if there was something wrong. I have wasted my time to run ’way over here.

“You should learn that there are different ways of barking. You can bark as you were barking now—excited and insistent. That gives warning that something is wrong. Or you can bark to ask some one to open a door for you. Or you can bark for the sheer joy of barking, just as children shout at their play. There’s a difference in barks that people as well as dogs know. Don’t bark false alarms, or people will not like you. I can’t stop to talk with you now. I’ve got work to do.”

With that Shep ran to the gate, clearing the top in one bound as he hurried on his way back to the sheep he was helping his master to round up. Rusty didn't have time to say that he was sorry. He stood for a minute; then, head and tail down, started back for camp and all the noise there.

For a long time before he got in sight of the camp he could hear Betty calling him, but he was so hurt that he did not hurry. When his little mistress saw him looking so forlorn she thought he had been after another skunk and ran into the house, shutting the door tight behind her. Seeing that even Betty did not want him, Rusty turned towards the Phillips' cottage to find Alice. She was seated in a big chair on the piazza and Rusty leaped into her lap, where Betty found him some time later.

She could not understand what was the matter with her pet, but she did understand that she had wronged him. Getting down on her knees his little mistress put her arms around him, kissed him as she told him that she ought to have known better than to think him guilty of again chasing a skunk. She told him how sorry she was that she had shut him out of his home.

Rusty's tail wagged a tiny bit to show her that he was slowly forgiving her and that in a few minutes he would be all right again. But he couldn't tell her what he had learned from Shep that morning or how heartbroken he was over the mistake he had made in the way he had called Shep. He was so forlorn and hurt that it was an hour before he would go home with Betty to eat breakfast. Because the girls were still making lots of noise with

their firecrackers, he stayed in the kitchen with Cook, who told him that she didn't like the noise any better than he did.

That evening he sat on the piazza with Betty, her mother, Mrs. Phillips, Alice and Joyce while Mr. Abbott and James took one of the boats and towed the raft they had made out into the lake. There where every one in camp could have a plain view the men shot off sky-rockets from the trough-like thing they had made, pin-wheels, that were fastened to the masts of the raft, Roman candles, flower-pots, and bombs, only Rusty didn't know what they were called. Being so far away, they didn't make the noise that hurt Rusty's head, so he enjoyed sitting there watching the long trails of sparks. He barked at the fun, but, remembering Shep, he was careful to show that it was just pleasure.



CHAPTER XIII

RUSTY GOES FISHING

THE days fairly flew along, even for Alice, for Rusty was devoted to her, and Betty and Joyce helped her to get to the boat in which they all passed many happy hours which otherwise would have ticked away very slowly for the injured girl. So fast did time fly that Dr. Parker came rattling into the camp in his old car before

any one remembered that a whole week had gone since Alice had sprained her ankle.

Alice he found seated on the piazza. She had been reading, but when she first heard the rattling that told her the doctor was on his way she was idly watching Betty and Joyce drifting in the boat not far from shore, with Rusty perched in the bow, on the lookout for danger. They, too, heard the car, and the girls began rowing as fast as they could for the wharf to welcome the doctor and to learn how much longer Alice must use crutches and keep the ankle in a tight bandage.

Rusty was in a very special hurry. He barked at the girls and raced from one end of the boat to the other in his efforts to hasten the progress to shore. Dr. Parker waved to the girls and told them not to hurry in the heat. He was listening to

hear Mrs. Phillips report what a good patient Alice had been, when Rusty raced up the steps and with one leap landed in Alice's lap. In another second he had flopped down with a sigh, his tail wagging furiously as he watched the doctor.

"You are a fraud," said the doctor with a laugh, shaking a finger at Rusty. "Here I left you to nurse and watch over Alice while I was away. I come back when you didn't expect me and I find you out on the lake with two girls who are in good health and do not need watching. I'm all through with you as a nurse, and I'm never going to invite you again."

Now Rusty, like any little dog, was sensitive to praise or blame. When he was not quite sure whether a person was really serious, he would remain quiet and study him, eager to catch the first certain sign of his meaning.

When he rushed from the boat to Alice, he did only what he had done whenever he got back from his meals at his own cottage, or from a tramp with James to the farm, or from a ride on the lake with Betty and Joyce. After all, he was not Alice's dog, but Betty's. He could not be expected to desert his own little mistress for her playmate all the time, even though Alice was crippled and could not always go with them until her ankle was well again.

The doctor he knew only as a man who had come to see them and who had a nice smile, a great deep voice, and who, Rusty could tell, liked little dogs. Rusty wanted to be friends, but not if being a friend meant any change in his plans for dividing his time.

So he watched the doctor very closely for the first sign that would make him

sure that he didn't mean anything by shaking his finger. But the doctor had a long story to tell about a patient of his that tired Rusty, who settled down to catch forty winks. Only when the doctor arose and drew a chair up beside Alice to unwrap the bandage did Rusty rouse. He was instantly all attention. In his interest to see just what was under the bandage, he moved around so much that Betty picked him up and held him in order that the doctor might work without the dog bothering him.

“I know you are just as anxious as I am, or as Alice or any of the rest,” said Dr. Parker, “but you know your part is to keep Alice company and not to help with operations or dressings. This has got along so wonderfully well that in a day or two you will be obliged to find some other place to lie than Alice's lap. She is

going to be up and around, although she has got to be very careful and not again turn this ankle or step in any holes the way she did the other time."

While he pretended to be talking only to Rusty, every one else heard and watched him closely as he made his examination. He again bandaged the ankle and told Alice that she could begin putting it on the floor while she walked with her crutches, but that she must not bear much weight on it for a few days.

Rusty sensed the good news and, squirming out of Betty's arms, ran down the steps where he turned around and barked furiously as if challenging Alice to get right up and have a romp with him. Mrs. Phillips arranged to have the crutches taken back to Dr. Parker's office, and when the doctor left a few minutes later Rusty raced ahead of him to his auto-

mobile, the door of which was open, leaped up on the seat and was ready to go for a ride even if he had not been invited.

“ So you’ve decided to ride with me to-day, have you? ” asked the friendly doctor as he climbed into his car. “ You think because I have dropped the case that you, the nurse, can quit, too, do you? You better ask Betty if you can go with me. Or, better yet, we will take Betty along with us as far as the farm and you can walk back with her.”

Betty and Joyce answered the doctor’s call, and decided that they would both ride to the farm. Calling to Mrs. Phillips that they would be back in a few minutes, they squeezed into the seat with their friend, Betty holding Rusty.

Dr. Parker was backing the car around when another automobile came into sight around the bend. Rusty barked a wel-

come, the girls waved and called and the doctor stopped his car.

Mr. Abbott had driven up from the city for the week-end, bringing his younger brother who had been away visiting friends since the close of the military school where he was studying. What a noisy welcome they did have! Alice came hobbling on her crutches, with her mother holding one arm to steady her on the rough walking, while from the Abbott cottage Mrs. Abbott hurried and had almost as big a hug and kiss for Frank Abbott as she did for her husband.

Everybody talked at once. Mr. Abbott and Frank sympathized with Alice, and Frank heard the story of Rusty's help from every one, until Rusty by jumping and barking received some attention from Mr. Abbott. He explained to Frank that Rusty was really his dog, but that his wife

and daughter had taken him away with them and wouldn't let him have him for even a few minutes.

"Well, I'm going to have him," announced Frank. "I'm going to fish every minute I can while I'm up here, and he's going with me. Aren't you, Rusty?" he asked, bending down and holding out his arms. Rusty leaped into them, sure that he would be caught!

"I never saw him do that before," exclaimed Betty and her mother at the same time.

"That shows what a clever teacher I am," laughed Frank. "A dog learns from me so quickly and easily that he doesn't know he's had a lesson."

He put Rusty down. After he had run around in his excitement for a pat from every one Frank held his arms again and once more Rusty leaped into them while

everybody applauded. After Dr. Parker had declared that Betty's dog could learn to do anything, and said that he wished he could stay and go fishing with Frank, he drove away. Everybody else piled into the Abbott car to ride the few hundred feet to their cottage.

From the shade of the shed which was used as the garage Rex came to greet his master. Frank roughed him a little, at the same time telling him that when the snow came they would have a real rough-and-tumble in the drifts. Lifting his suitcase and fishing-tackle from the car, Frank disappeared in the cottage to change to fishing clothes. He declared that he was not intending to waste any time.

Rusty dashed in with him. A minute later, out he came again to be certain that his master was not leaving him behind.

When he heard the front door slam and saw Frank headed for the wharf he dashed after him bent on a ride in the boat and his first adventure at fishing. Once they were clear of the wharf and headed up the lake where Frank said was the best fishing, Rusty took his place in the bow. His front feet were on the very outside edge as they always were when the boat was moving. He was like a figurehead on the old ships that once sailed the seas.

“ You see, Rusty,” said Frank, “ it’s getting along towards sunset which means the pickerel will begin to bite. We’ll get enough for supper if I have any luck. And I’ll have it, if you do not make too much noise. You understand, don’t you, that you are not to be yelping around while I am fishing? ”

All this was said while Frank was rowing with his back to Rusty. The dog paid

no attention. Fishing was something he knew nothing about. None of the girls cared for it, and what little time Mr. Abbott could be at camp he enjoyed on the piazza or pitching horseshoes, except for his one swim each day. Rusty always went in with him, and whenever the girls went bathing, Rusty went, too.

Having rowed well up the lake, Frank turned in towards some stumps and lily-pads, where he stopped rowing and let the boat drift while he fussed with his rod and line. With the rapid progress of the boat checked, Rusty lost interest in what was ahead of them and turned to watch what Frank was doing.

He saw him make several short pieces of his rod grow into one long one and wondered what he was going to do with the long string fastened to it. He watched Frank whirl the string in the air to throw

it out over the water, then stood with his feet on the gunwale of the boat undecided whether to jump after it.

Only the slightest splash did he see but he watched closely the little ripples on the surface as Frank jerked the line along. Up in the bow Rusty went once more, the better to see all that was going on. Frank pulled the line out of the water only to toss it far out again, then repeat the act again and again, jerking it along each time. Rusty thought that a very foolish way of spending an afternoon. Failing to see anything of interest to dogs in that he was about to curl down for a nap when Frank suddenly gave a quick jerk and the line began to act differently.

Something long, bright, and shiny, twisting and squirming as it flirted sparkling water drops in a wide circle on the lake, came into sight on the end of the line.

That was worth seeing, so Rusty barked his pleasure.

Frank dropped the fish in the bottom of the boat, bending over it while he removed the hook from its mouth. When he straightened up, he told Rusty that he was welcome to see what he thought of a nice, big pickerel fresh from the water. Rusty jumped down watching the flopping fish closely, as he advanced slowly towards it. When it remained quiet a moment, Rusty tried to smell of it, only to be slapped with its tail on his nose. He jumped back and sneezed. He didn't like water in his nose.

Barking in surprise he jumped at it, but the flopping of the fish in the water in the bottom of the boat sprayed Rusty. He backed off, shook himself and looked up to find Frank laughing at him.

"That was a new one, wasn't it,

Rusty?" said Frank. "You hadn't been introduced to a live fish before, had you? Well, you get up on your perch again and I'll show you some more."

So Rusty climbed up in the bow again to watch every move of this friend of his, who every now and then pulled in another fish, for Frank was a good fisherman. Rusty barked his applause as each new catch flopped around in the bottom of the boat, but he did not again get down to smell of them.

Frank was just about ready to stop for the afternoon, because he was getting hungry and he could smell something cooking, when he caught another. Before he could swing it over the boat it flopped off into the water. Rusty knew that Frank wanted that fish, so overboard he went.

To his surprise, after he got in the water he could not see it. He swam in a

circle, whining in his eagerness to catch it for his master's brother. Frank told him that it was nice of him to try to save it for him, but he was afraid it would take so long that he could not wait.

As Frank rowed back to the wharf, Rusty paddled along behind the boat, climbed out on the bank, gave a couple of shakes and ran out on the wharf where Frank was placing his catch. His fish on the wharf, Frank stopped to unjoint his pole. Rusty saw that only one of them flopped even feebly and he crept slowly closer, and smelled of the one nearest him. When it made no move, he grabbed it and ran for the cottage.

Cook was seated at the back door preparing a sauce, when Rusty appeared and laid the pickerel at her feet.

“Where you get dat fish?” asked Cook, her eyes opening wide in surprise. “You

ben fishin' wid Betty's uncle and catch 'im yo'sef?" she asked. Putting down her spoon and bowl she picked up the fish and found there was not a single tooth-mark on it, so carefully had the dog carried it in his mouth.

"Here, Cook," said Frank, coming around the corner of the cottage just then with the rest of his catch, "here's some fish for supper. Why, where did you get that?" he exclaimed, pointing to the one Cook was holding. "I thought I had one more, but I couldn't find it!"

Cook explained, and Frank reached down and pulled one of Rusty's ears. He told him that he was a good boy and showed that he knew where to take things to be cooked. Later, Rusty heard Frank telling his master that his spaniel was the smartest dog he ever had seen.



CHAPTER XIV.

RUSTY TO THE RESCUE

WITH Frank in camp and Alice able in a few days to join Betty and Joyce, the remainder of Rusty's summer was one of delightful haste to enjoy the many things he found to do. Frank taught him to carry anything given him without damaging it. He trained him with great patience not to drop it for any reason, no matter

what the temptation. He found it hard coming back from the farm not to stop to tell one of the squirrels what he thought about their saucy chatter whenever he came along the path. But in time Rusty learned that anything he was told to "carry" was not to be dropped, or even carefully laid down without permission.

It was very different with a tennis-ball that went outside of the white lines that marked the court. Those he was expected to find and carry back without being told. When the girls were very careless in their play, allowing many, many balls to go outside, he sometimes got tired enough to go for a swim with Frank or, in the late afternoon, for a short fishing trip. He no longer barked every time a fish was caught, nor did he jump overboard when one occasionally wriggled free from the hook. But he enjoyed every minute.

The day came at last when Rusty knew that something much out of the ordinary was going on. Betty and her friends were depressed and unhappy. Every one else had more things to do than ever before. They did things they never had done all the long summer. Mr. Abbott had returned to camp and, instead of sitting on the piazza with Rusty's mistress, or pitching horseshoes, he was the busiest of all.

Nobody wanted Rusty about. They stumbled over him, stepped on him, and grew impatient because he tried to see and smell what was being done. He got in their way, no matter where he went. Naturally he gave a delighted yelp when Frank called to him to "come and do some work."

Down near the wharf he found Mr. Abbott, Frank, and James at the big flat-bottomed boat that Frank had used for

fishing and swimming. It was out of the water, perched on rollers. A long rope was hitched to the bow and stretched out on the ground.

“Catch hold of that rope and pull, Rusty,” ordered Frank. “Pull for all you’re worth, or we’ll never get this boat put away.”

If there was anything Rusty delighted to do, it was to pull and tug on something. He pounced on the rope, shifted it in his mouth until he got a satisfactory hold, dug in his toes, growled, shook his head and tugged and pulled while the men shouted at him and at each other. The boat moved forward a little and Rusty, satisfied that he had made it move, pulled still harder and growled more fiercely. It was the best tug he had ever had.

The next thing he knew, he was away under the piazza with the boat taking up

almost every inch of the space. Frank was calling to him to come out, for there was another boat that must be put up for the winter. Because he knew every inch of space under the piazza, Rusty managed to squeeze out and help with the other boat.

Getting in the boats was only one of the hundred and one things that had to be done that day. Cook alone did not hurry, for Cook was one of those fortunate people who always manage to get their work done without getting excited about it. Rusty made many trips to the shore and to his dish of water in the kitchen, for he found it thirsty work helping to close camp for the winter.

Rex didn't let the fuss disturb him in the least. He stretched out on the pine needles close to the station car where he could keep an eye on it and let the rest

do the work. Betty, like Rex, didn't do very much. She sat a long time on the end of the wharf looking out over the water and saying nothing. Rusty got some rest as he sat beside her with her arm around him.

"You see, Rusty," she said, "we've got to go home this afternoon, because it's getting late in the season and school opens next week. Why, I must go to school and leave all this water and woods and flowers and sweet smells, the pet chipmunk and the birds and squirrels and everything lovely, I can't understand, can you?"

"Yip," said Rusty.

"I don't believe you. You say what sounds like 'yes,' and you know you don't know why we must leave this glorious camp any more than I do. I really want to cry, Rusty, but I'm not going to. It

won't do any good, and, anyway, it's beginning to get cold nights. Pretty soon snow will be here, and then it will not be so nice and comfy, even with that big fireplace. You'll have a nice long ride in the automobile, and you'll like that just as I will, only I wish we were coming back at the end of it, don't you?"

"Yip," said Rusty again.

"Of course you do. Yes, Mother, I'm coming," she called in reply to her mother, who wanted her to come and eat lunch, so they could finish the work of closing the cottage, the upper windows of which had already been closed in for winter with great wooden blinds that James had put on.

"I never saw a dog get so excited over anything as that Rusty does," said Mr. Abbott, as Rusty jumped up on Betty's chair and waited for a bite of something

or other. What it would be, made no difference to him. He had even eaten a morsel of beet one day before he knew what it was Betty had offered him. Rusty was a trifle ashamed of that, but he never let them know it.

“He has worked harder than all of the rest of us put together,” continued his master. “I don’t know how Frank and I would have got that boat up even with James’ help if it hadn’t been for the tugging that dog did. He ought to be completely tuckered out, and sleep all the way home.”

Rusty looked at his master and then at Frank. Frank laughed. “He doesn’t want to ride. He wants to run beside me on my bicycle,” he said. Rusty’s tail wagged furiously.

“You are not going to ride all the way home on that wheel,” exclaimed Mrs.

Abbott. "Put your wheel in the station car and ride with us. We'll find room for you."

"I'm going to ride part of the way on the wheel," replied Frank. "It's cool through the woods, and I need the exercise. I'll start ahead of you, and when you overtake me, I'll climb on with James."

Rusty knew that the talk concerned him and he watched Frank closely, always remembering to keep one eye on Betty's hand. He hadn't the slightest intention of deserting his little mistress for long, but he did love to play with Frank. And Betty, to tell the truth, was perfectly willing that her uncle should share some of Rusty's play time.

"You see," she told her mother once, "dogs like boys and men, and I think it is a good plan for Rusty to play with

Uncle Frank some instead of being with us girls and you all the time."

Her mother had agreed with her, and now at the table she said that she supposed Rusty would like to run with a man, for Betty's father got very little time to give to Rusty. She was smiling when she said that, and Betty's father looked up quickly.

"What's that?" he asked. "I seem to have little time for Rusty, you say? Whenever I try to take him with me for a few hours, either you or Betty say you cannot spare him. When I get home at night, he eats his dinner and, if Betty is going out to play, so is Rusty. If not, he sticks close to her so that he won't miss a chance to go to bed with the first one upstairs. Pretty chance I have to play with him!"

"Poor Daddy," said Betty, putting her arm around Rusty and giving him a bite

of bread. "When we get home he shall have Rusty every minute of the time that Mother or I do not need him—or Frank, while he is there."

Her father groaned and Betty smiled, for she knew he was only joking and that he was only too glad to have Rusty with them all the time.

It was a hasty meal, for much was left to be done before the start home could be made. Rusty hurried to the kitchen to have his last meal in camp. He was anxious to be ready when Frank was, for it was not every day that he had a chance for a nice run through the cool woods.

It was an hour or more after lunch before Betty was joined by Alice and Joyce. The girls were so mournful about leaving that Rusty had hard work to cheer them up. While he was on the wharf with them, he heard Frank shouting his good-

byes and promises to ride in the car when it caught up with him.

Frank did not call him, and Rusty hesitated about going. But as Frank was disappearing around the bend in the road Betty told him to go along if he wanted to, for they would soon overtake him and he could have his run and his ride as well. With that Rusty dashed off, and it was a good thing for Frank that he did. Even his master said so, later in the day.

They raced along side by side until they came to the first long hill in the woods. There Frank got off and walked, pushing his bicycle. He told Rusty that it was easier to walk up a hill than to push a bicycle up while riding it. He was in no hurry, because the rest of the family would not start for an hour and all Frank wanted was to ride on the first part of the journey which was through the cool woods.

Rusty found that he had plenty of time to look into several holes, even to stop and dig a little at two of them just to warn whatever might be at home that if he cared to waste time on them they would not be safe. When they got to the top of the hill after Frank had taken a long rest part way up, Frank mounted his bicycle and rode along. Just then a red squirrel scurried across the road and into a stone wall. Rusty turned aside to see just which hole he had gone into and how big it was. He spent some time trying to find him and would have stayed there longer had he not heard Frank call.

“Hi, Rusty. Hi, Rusty. Quick! Help!”

Rusty cocked his ears and listened. Something in the tone of voice made him understand that this was no time to be fooling around with a little red squirrel.

Laying back his big ears so that they wouldn't flap in his eyes he started along that road faster than he ever had run in his whole life.

Frank had got farther away from him than he supposed, but at last he turned a corner and there was Frank struggling with a big man. Both had their hands on the bicycle and were pulling this way and that. Rusty saw the man strike Frank and knock him down. Without a sound of warning, Rusty launched his little body through the air and for the first time in his life fastened his teeth in anger. He caught hold of the calf of the man's right leg and held on.

The man let go of the bicycle as he tried to strike Rusty. But Rusty turned and twisted, keeping behind the man but always hanging on. In trying to turn around quickly the man tripped and fell.

Still Rusty hung on, dodging the kicks aimed at him by the other foot. The little dog was very tired but Frank was slowly getting to his feet and urging him to hold on, as he heard the sound of an automobile horn that he knew, no matter where he heard it.

Then came the sound of his master's voice shouting encouragement. As Frank struggled to his feet, Rusty received a hard kick on the head. Frank's assailant had managed to get to his feet and headed for the woods, Rusty still hanging on. He let go only at the insistent calls of his master and both mistresses, wearily turning towards them to be picked up by his master and handed to Betty, who cried over him.

Rusty kissed the tears away to tell her that he was not badly hurt. After Frank and his master had patted him, telling him

that he looked like a spaniel but hung on like a bulldog, James looked him over and announced that he had not been badly hurt. With the bicycle added to the load on the station car, Frank climbed in with the family and Rusty slept the rest of the long way home, where he was to pass the long fall and winter, with many more adventures ahead of him.



CHAPTER XV

RUSTY GOES TO SCHOOL

ALTHOUGH Betty had been unhappy about leaving camp, when they arrived home again that afternoon she was as delighted to be there as she had been to reach the camp long weeks before. And Rusty was just as delighted. To show it, he leaped from the car, ran up the front steps, ran back to the car, then to the back

door and once more back to the car, barking at every jump.

“Now, Betty,” said Mr. Abbott, “you take that black bundle of nerves and chain-lightning and tie him to a tree somewhere, or we shall all break our legs falling over him. It isn’t safe to step anywhere with that dog running around. We have so many things to carry into the house that we can’t always see him, and if we do, we can’t dodge him.”

“I’ll run over to see Jennie and Pauline, and he’ll go with me,” said Betty. “That will get him out of the way. I want to tell them all the wonderful things he has done this summer, and what good times we have had.”

Her mother agreed that it would be a good plan, so Betty called Rusty and ran down the street, Rusty ahead barking from joy, as he always did unless Betty

told him to "heel." She made him follow only when she was walking on an errand, for Betty usually hopped and skipped on the street when she was on her way to one of her playmates.

They turned the corner and caught sight of Jennie in the front yard of her home. Betty "coo-ed," Rusty barked and raced ahead to leap up on Jennie with little cries of joy at seeing her again. Pauline came hurrying out of the house, and the girls hugged and kissed each other as they all talked at the top of their voices at the same time.

While Rusty was greeting the girls and being welcomed by them, who should come around the corner but Mittens! She had crept along, silently, to learn what all the noise was about, and to see what dog was around where her children were.

Rusty ran towards her with a little yelp

of pleasure. Mittens crouched down, laid back her ears, and allowed Rusty to kiss her, not only once, but several times.

Betty gathered Mittens in her arms and was rubbing her the way all cats like to be rubbed, when around the corner came Mittens' children. They were now so much grown and so changed were their looks that Rusty did not know them as the tiny things he had tried to help their mother care for. At sight of Rusty each one of them humped its back, every hair stood on end, and they spit in chorus when Rusty started towards them. While he would chase a full-grown cat, if the cat would run, he had no intention of bothering babies.

But Mittens wasn't sure. Leaping from Betty's arms she went to the protection of her family. The girls were a long time trying to make Rusty understand

that they were Mittens' kittens, the same ones he had washed and tried to carry as their mother did. Rusty was willing enough to be friends, but the kittens were slow to be convinced that he wouldn't hurt them, although they saw that their mother was not afraid of him.

Betty had so many things to tell her friends that it was almost supper time when she started home. Ahead of her ran Rusty. Behind her, tail straight in the air, walked Mittens. Behind their mother, tails straight up like hers, followed her kittens in single file.

It was a long walk for the kittens, so Betty walked slowly, turning around every few steps to be sure they were following her. When Betty's father caught sight of the procession, he called Mrs. Abbott to see the return of the family's entire collection of pets. He said that all

they lacked was the pet chipmunk from camp to have the list complete, unless they included Rusty's skunk. When he mentioned that animal, he looked at Rusty with one hand to his nose. Rusty moved away, head and tail drooped. He knew what was meant, and did not like to be reminded of that morning.

When Mr. Abbott dropped his hand and smiled, Rusty, knowing he was forgiven, returned to the group. Betty led the procession around to the kitchen door where all were welcomed by Cook and Sarah. The kittens had been too young to remember the house in which they had been born, and of course did not remember Cook or the maid. At first they spent much of their time under the stove, but Mittens remembered her home and made herself comfortable.

Rusty, too, found the kitchen familiar,

going at once to his dish under the sink, where Mittens followed him to get her first drink of milk in her own home in a long time.

The next day Betty confided to Rusty that in two more days she must return to school. "You will miss me almost every morning and every afternoon," she told him. "We cannot be together almost all of the time as we have been all summer. Uncle Frank will be gone, too, so I know you will be lonesome, but we just can't help it."

She hugged and kissed him until Rusty knew that something was bothering his little mistress. But try as he would, he could not understand what it could be. However, when the day came that Betty would not let him out with her, Rusty remembered that Betty used to leave him like that. He hopped on a chair by the

front window to watch her as far as he could see her. He moped around the house all morning, following Mrs. Abbott wherever she went. She knew what was the matter and told him that she was lonely for Betty also. Once Rusty said "Woof" softly at the kitchen door and Cook opened it. She told him that it was a shame that a nice dog like him could not go to school and be with his little mistress all of the time. Rusty could not quite understand, but he felt comforted.

Just as if Cook's words had carried through the air all the way to Betty's school, the idea came to Miss Judson, Betty's teacher. Each boy and girl had told that first morning what they had done during the long summer vacation. Betty, of course, had told all about how clever and brave Rusty had been. Jennie and Pauline had heard the story, but none of

the others, including Miss Judson, knew anything about it.

Miss Judson, who had come from the country to teach in the small city where the Abbotts and their friends lived, had always had a dog. Where her home had been, many of the children had dogs that followed them to school, and some that were allowed in the schoolrooms. After Betty had told her story, Miss Judson thought a minute before she asked the children if they would not like to see the little dog they had heard so much about. Miss Judson smiled at the shout that went up from every boy and girl, and asked Betty if she would not like to bring Rusty that afternoon for the children to see.

Betty, of course, was delighted, but she thought perhaps her father and mother would think it was not right. To make certain there would be no mistake Miss

Judson wrote a note to Mrs. Abbott which Betty hurried home with at noon. Her mother was afraid that Rusty would not follow closely and might get run over, but Mr. Abbott said Rusty minded well, and if Betty told him to "heel" when she left the house he would stay right behind her all the way to school. It wasn't very far, and it was on a quiet street with no dangerous crossings. That settled it, and after lunch Rusty found himself trotting close at Betty's heels on his first visit to school.

As Betty went along she was joined by Jennie and Pauline. A minute later, Jimmy Watts and Freddie Hanson caught up with them, each of them giving Rusty an admiring pat. Before they reached the school, Betty was in the company of a dozen or more of her school-mates, all talking at once about Rusty or

other dogs of which they had heard or read. They all agreed that Rusty's going for help with the stocking tied to his collar showed what a smart dog he was.

The rest of the children they found in the school yard, for every one of them had hurried through the midday meal to get back to school early to see Rusty. Again and again Betty told the story, and time after time she pointed out the little spot on his neck that gave him his name.

Four of the boys were playing catch, when one of them missed the ball which rolled to the fence. Betty told Rusty to go and get it. He found it larger and harder than the tennis-balls he had been getting for the girls but he managed to get it between his jaws to carry to Betty. He would take it only to her. After that, Jimmy Williams purposely missed the ball to let Rusty bring it back.

The bell rang in a few minutes. Instead of hurrying into the schoolroom, the pupils all held back to allow Betty and Rusty to go in first. Then they crowded in behind them to see what Rusty would do when he was introduced to Miss Judson.

Betty's seat was in the very last row on a side aisle. Miss Judson told Betty to walk right to her seat and have Rusty stay with her until every one was seated. After that she said she would like to meet the brave little dog. The room was new to Rusty, and he very much wanted to smell around, but he obeyed Betty when she told him to lie down.

It was natural for the children to try to see what Rusty did. It was very exciting for him to have so many to play with and very hard to lie quietly. When the children were all quiet, Miss Judson said

that after Betty had told them the story of Rusty she had invited him to school that all of them might make his acquaintance.

“If we are all quiet, I know of no reason why such a well-behaved dog should not come to school every day,” she said. “Where I have lived in the country town, there were always some dogs that came with the boys and girls. Some of them remained in the schoolroom, while others waited outside to go home with their owners. If we do not pay too much attention to Rusty until he gets used to us, I think we shall all like to have him with us regularly. Now, if Betty will bring him up on the platform we will have him for a few minutes where we all can see him. Then for our English lesson, we will all write about him.”

When Betty got up from her seat,

Rusty jumped up and followed her. As Betty stepped up on the platform, she motioned to a chair on to which Rusty jumped.

“Please sit up and shake hands with Miss Judson,” said Betty. That was a trick her Uncle Frank had taught him. So well had he been trained that the person giving the command spoke only in an ordinary tone of voice. Rusty promptly sat up, letting his left front paw hang limp while he held his right one out straight.

Miss Judson understood dogs and children. While the children laughed and clapped their hands, she bent over very solemnly to shake Rusty’s paw, then gently pulled one ear, as she told him she had heard such nice things about him that she hoped he would come to school often with his mistress.

“Say ‘Thank you,’” commanded

Betty. Rusty gave a little yip, which made the children laugh and applaud again.

“Perhaps,” said Miss Judson, “if Rusty shows off his tricks now, we shall all know what he can do which will give us a little more to write about for our lesson.”

So Betty had him sneeze, say his prayers, play dead dog, roll over, speak softly, speak very loud, and tell them it was bedtime by yawning.

When Rusty had finished, Miss Judson said she thought it would be nice if Rusty would lie down on her desk. “There we could all see him while we are writing about him,” she said. “Do you think he would lie there for a few minutes, Betty?”

Betty was sure he would when he understood that she was not going to leave him behind. She lifted Rusty up on the desk where Miss Judson gave him a bit of

cracker she had taken from a drawer in her desk. She patted him, and he kissed her hand. Betty told him to be good and remain there.

Rusty sat and watched her as she walked to her seat. Miss Judson gave him another bit of cracker, telling him to lie down. Rusty looked at her as if wondering what right she had to tell him to do anything. She smiled at him, telling him again to lie down and be comfortable. In a minute or two he turned around three times, flopped down, and gave the little sigh he always gave when he was ready to have a nap.

When the time came for recess, Rusty jumped to his feet, but did not try to get down from the desk, although he kept his eyes on Betty. The children passed him, each one speaking to him or touching him. But not one of them did Rusty look at,

not even Jennie and Pauline, for he was keeping his eyes on Betty who was at the very end of the line. When she reached him he jumped down and leaped up against her.

Miss Judson talked with Betty about him and about a little dog she had had when younger. She loved dogs, and believed that every boy and girl ought to have one and be taught to be kind to them. She said she hoped Betty's mother would permit Rusty to attend school often.

Betty was sure that he would be allowed to come, at least some of the time, explaining to Miss Judson that her mother loved Rusty so much that she liked to have him with her some of the time.

After that day, on almost every pleasant morning Rusty could be seen trotting along to school close behind Betty. Part of the time he slept on a corner of teach-

er's desk, where Miss Judson would sometimes pull one of his silky ears. The rest of the time he would lie in the aisle at the side of Betty's desk.

The children soon learned to pay no attention to him. He became such a favorite with them that they wanted him to come in the afternoons also, but Mrs. Abbott claimed him then.



CHAPTER XVI

RUSTY'S CHRISTMAS

GOING to school so widened Rusty's acquaintance that Mrs. Abbott, returning one afternoon in the car with Rusty, told Betty that every one in the city knew their Rusty. She had come out of a store to find a lady she did not know petting Rusty. The lady had explained that she was the mother of Jimmy Williams, who

had told her so many stories about Rusty that she could not resist stopping to pet him.

Knowing so many people did not bother Rusty. He liked them all, having learned to forgive one boy who had kicked him before he understood that Rusty was running after his ball to carry it back. Forgiving him had taken a long time, but Rusty had accomplished it.

The cool weather of the early fall rapidly changed to the first cold days of approaching winter. Early one morning, Rusty, awakening to find himself shivering, tried to snuggle down closer under his blanket. He aroused Betty, for, since coming back from camp, he had insisted upon sleeping almost every night on Betty's bed all night instead of changing to that of his big mistress when she retired.

Sleepily reaching down, his little mistress pulled the cover closer over her pet. Turning over to sleep longer, she saw that all outdoors was white! With Christmas only a few days away and school closed for the holidays, snow was a welcome sight. She sat up, rubbing her eyes until she was wide awake.

“Look, Rusty! Quick!” she exclaimed.

Rusty sat up and looked at her. Taking his head in her hands, she turned him so that he would look out of the window.

“See,” she exclaimed, “the snow has come! Come on. We’ll go out and play in it.”

Rusty sprang to the floor. With one shake he was ready for the fun of the day. But Betty had much more to do before she could be ready for an outdoors romp. Awakened so suddenly and with Betty

evidently in such a hurry, Rusty barked in his excitement.

“What’s wrong?” asked Betty’s father from his room. “What is Rusty barking about, Betty?” he asked anxiously.

“He sees the snow,” she replied, “and I’m hurrying to go out with him to see what he will do.”

Mr. Abbott thought that amusing. He suggested that they had better eat some breakfast first, assuring his daughter that he would be honored to have her company at the morning meal. After a rather hurried breakfast, warmly dressed, Betty opened the front door and Rusty bounded down the steps.

Of the many surprises he had experienced in his short life, perhaps none equalled the one he received when he tried to stop and turn on the cement sidewalk. Rain had fallen and frozen with the light

snow, making the walk the slipperiest imaginable. Vainly he tried to dig in his claws as he slid sideways helplessly towards the closed gate, against which he brought up with a thump that forced a yelp of mingled pain and fright.

That was Rusty's first experience with snow and ice; at least, the first he could remember. Later, he discovered that it meant when his big mistress went to the home of a neighbor, she always put something on her feet that she kept in the front entry. Long before then Rusty had learned to fetch Mr. Abbott's slippers at night after dinner. He was delighted to get Mrs. Abbott's rubbers for her.

Opening the door to the entry she would seat herself on the big settle in the hall after asking Rusty to get her rubbers. Having brought them and had an ear

gently pulled, he seated himself by the door as he waited to go out with her. He knew all the neighbors, especially those who opened the doors themselves. Most of them liked him, so Rusty often went on errands with his mistress.

But in the winter, or when it was very wet, he was not allowed to enter the houses with her. He was at liberty either to wait for her or return home where, if he barked at the kitchen door, Cook would admit him—if she hadn't freshly mopped her kitchen floor. If she had, he went to the garage, where James was always glad to see him whether his feet were dirty or not. That was one nice trait about James. He loved Rusty whether he was span clean or had just run through a mud puddle to make a bird fly. Making birds fly was great sport.

Having helped his mistress with her

rubbers one day, he trotted with her to the end of the street where she turned into the yard of a dear friend. Removing her rubbers she entered the house after telling Rusty that he could wait or go home to James.

For a minute Rusty was undecided what to do. He knew it would be a long time before Betty would be home from school, James had gone somewhere with the car, and probably Cook had freshly mopped the floor and would not let him in. He stood up to look in the window but no one was in sight to say, "Oh, let him come in."

Disheartened, he was about to return in an effort to persuade Cook to let him in when he noticed his mistress's rubbers. Picking up one he raced home with it. Back he went and got the other. Again he returned but there were no more to be

had. But at the next house were two large ones.

Those he carried, one by one, and deposited them on his steps. By that time he was greatly interested in his new game. He scoured the neighborhood, adding steadily to his collection. When his mistress came home, picking her way carefully through the slush, he was standing on the piazza very proud of his work, as was plain to be seen by the vigorous wagging of his tail and his delighted barks of welcome which plainly said, "See what I have done for you."

One thing that always puzzled Rusty was why at most unexpected moments his mistress would sit down wherever she was and laugh, wipe her eyes as if crying, as she called for some one to come to her. That's what she did then.

Opening the front door she called

loudly for Mandy to come to her at once. Mandy waddled to the door to look where her mistress pointed. She raised both hands high in the air and Rusty was sure folks away off at camp could hear her shouts.

With so much appreciation of his efforts in evidence, Rusty joined with barks of self-applause. But when he rushed to help his mistress as she started to sort them, he learned that he had done more than had been expected of him. Cook shut him in the kitchen. From there he could hear his mistress at the telephone, talking and laughing for a long time. She said that she was explaining, and that James would return in a few minutes.

When James came, all the rubbers that Rusty had collected, with two small rubber boots and four arctics, were put in the big car which James drove from house to

house where he showed them to the owners who came out to the car laughingly to pick out what belonged to them. But the biggest pair James brought back with a message for Mrs. Abbott. More telephoning, more laughter before James drove away again. Upon his return he confided to Cook that the doctor wanted to buy a dog like Rusty to keep him in shoes and rubbers.

Betty thought Rusty's raid on the rubbers of the neighborhood was a great joke. She told all her friends about it, explaining that it wasn't stealing, because Rusty thought he was helping his mistress. Her friends agreed, but whenever they left their rubbers on the piazza at Betty's home, as they did when they went there to play with Betty and Rusty, they expected to find more than they had left.

Rusty knew that he had made a mistake.

In some way he knew that he was not expected to carry rubbers from house to house, and except for that one time he never took anything until Christmas Day.

He never had made himself sick by eating more of anything than was good for him. Of some things he was very fond, and would do almost anything to have Betty, Cook, or any one, for that matter, feed them to him or let him eat them. Cook declared that there was no need to wash a plate on which ice-cream had been, because Rusty would lick it cleaner than it could be washed. It didn't make the least bit of difference about the flavor so long as it was ice-cream. Neither did it make any difference if the weather were cold or hot. Rusty would eat ice-cream any time he could get it.

Christmas Day found Betty with, oh, lots of presents that kept her busy all the

morning. As dinner time approached, Betty said that she needed one more thing to make her happy, and that was ice-cream. Mr. Abbott told her that if she wished to bundle up and go to the store for some, she could have it.

Calling Rusty, Betty visited the store of Mr. Marsh. While he was filling the order she told him how fond Rusty was of ice-cream. Placing a little on a dish Mr. Marsh put it on the floor as his Christmas present to Rusty. The little dog cleaned the plate and shook hands to express his thanks. With her ice-cream in a big carton, Betty hurried home, knowing that dinner with the turkey and all the "fixings" must be almost ready. Rusty didn't go into the house, preferring to go to the garage for a frolic with Rex, for in cold weather Rex was a good play-fellow.

When Betty buried the carton in the big drift near the kitchen door to keep it until they were ready, no one was in sight. But when she went for it, the carton was gone. On the verge of tears at her disappointment, Betty announced that nothing could be meaner than to steal ice-cream on Christmas Day.

Search by her father confirmed the fact that nothing but the hole in the snow was left to remind Betty of her dessert. The absence of the carton was pretty certain evidence that it had been stolen. Betty refused any of Cook's plum pudding and left the table, calling for Rusty to tell him that he couldn't have any, either. Only then did she remember that Rusty hadn't been at table with her as he was almost every meal.

Upstairs and down-cellar she called. But no Rusty answered. She went to the

front door. And there stood Rusty! He was shivering and shaking with the cold. His eyes were running. He was whining pitifully, and appeared so sick that Betty dropped on her knees in the open doorway to pick him up. But Rusty staggered by her to the big round register in the big front room from which the hot air was pouring.

He stood over it and sneezed. For once his sneeze was not a trick. He couldn't help it. Spreading his legs as wide as he could he put his stomach down on the almost hot iron of the register, shivering and whining as the tears continued to roll from his eyes. He was a sick little dog.

"I think I smell a mouse, or ice-cream, or something," said Mr. Abbott as he stood looking at Rusty after Betty had called that her pet was surely dying.

Going out on the piazza he returned with the empty carton. On the top were the marks of teeth and some of the top had been torn off.

“Here’s what you brought the cream home in, Betty,” he said, showing it to her. “And there’s where your cream is now, right inside that dog. He’s the thief, and he’s paying for it now, just as we all do when we eat more of anything than is good for us. I don’t know what we can do with a dog that steals ice-cream—and on Christmas Day, too.”

Betty dropped on her knees, her arms around her pet, declaring that no one should scold her dog on Christmas Day, a day when all were supposed to forgive. Rusty very feebly licked her hand to thank her.

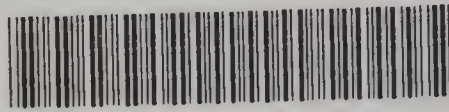
Never again did Rusty lick the ice-cream dishes for Cook. He never forgot

that lesson of Christmas Day, when for once in his life he had too much to eat.



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